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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
BLOC POPULAIRE CANADIEN, 1942-47

by



LYNNE REE

A THESIS
SUBMITTED TO THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH
IN PARTIAL FULFILMENT OF THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE
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DEPARTMENT OF HISTORY

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THE UNIVERSITY OF ALBERTA
FACULTY OF GRADUATE STUDIES AND RESEARCH

The undersigned certify that they have read, and recommend to the Faculty of Graduate Studies and Research, for acceptance, a thesis entitled "Bloc Populaire Canadien, 1942-47," submitted by Lynne Ree in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Arts.

ABSTRACT

The Bloc Populaire Canadien was formed in the fall of 1942 as a result of the growing fear of French Canadians that Canadian involvement in World War II would result in the introduction of conscription. The nationalist revival which accompanied the anti-conscriptionist campaign of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada early in 1942 lead to the formation of the Bloc Populaire in September of that year under the leadership of Maxime Raymond, federal member of Parliament who broke with the Liberal party over the conscription plebiscite. Those who rallied to the Bloc after its formation in 1942 included federal members of Parliament and former Liberals, Edouard Lacroix and Dr. Pierre Gauthier, and well-known provincial nationalists, Paul Gouin, Dr. Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult.

While primarily a party of protest against Canadian involvement in the war, the Bloc Populaire also adopted a programme of extensive reform in both the areas of federal and provincial concern. The nationalist origins of the Bloc Populaire are clearly evident in its platform, as illustrated by the demand in its federal platform for the recognition of equal rights for both French and English-speaking Canadians, and by the emphasis in its provincial platform on the family, la survivance, and the Roman Catholic religion. While showing an awareness of the problems experienced by Quebec as a result of industrialization, the Bloc platform indicates that French Canadians had not yet

fully accepted the implications of the industrial transformation of Quebec.

The Bloc Populaire was weakened from the beginning by poor organization, internal dissension, and the lack of financial support. Encouraged by its victory in the 1943 federal by-election in Stanstead, the Bloc waged an intensive and aggressive campaign in the provincial general election in August 1944. However the results were disappointing and the Bloc elected only four members to the Legislative Assembly. Seriously disorganized as a result of their defeat, the Bloc succeeded in sufficiently regrouping its forces to lead an active campaign in the federal general election in June 1945. Once again the hopes for success of the Bloc Populaire failed to materialize. Only two Bloc members were elected to the House of Commons on 11 June. The party did not long survive this second disappointment. The conclusion of the war deprived the party of its most important unifying force and, after 1945, the Bloc Populaire Canadien slowly disintegrated.

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ABBREVIATIONS

A.C.J.C.	Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne-Française
A.L.N.	Action Libérale Nationale
B.P.C.	Bloc Populaire Canadien
I.H.	Institut de l'Histoire de l'Amérique-Française, Montreal
PAC	Public Archives of Canada, Ottawa
U.C.C.	Union Catholique des Cultivateurs

INTRODUCTION

The brief life span of the Bloc Populaire Canadien during the years of the Second World War has until now received only passing attention from either English or French-speaking historians. English-speaking historians in particular have dismissed the Bloc Populaire as a brief and emotional outburst of French Canadian nationalism, sighing with relief over the inability of the party to win a solid base of support among the French Canadian voters.¹ Since the Bloc was born out of Quebec's protest against conscription and disintegrated shortly after the end of the war, the tendency has been to treat the Bloc Populaire solely as a manifestation of Quebec's reaction to Canadian involvement in the war. Its inability to maintain unity within its own ranks and its failure to achieve the electoral success it sought make it easy to dismiss the party as a failure and, therefore, insignificant.² Yet the fact remains that the Bloc Populaire, during its brief existence, became an important focus of French Canadian nationalism. Those who endorsed or supported the Bloc included Abbé Lionel Groulx, the grey eminence of French Canadian nationalism; Henri Bourassa, the champion of equal rights for French Canadians since 1911; and Georges Pelletier, editor of the nationalist newspaper, Le Devoir. Not only did the Bloc attract politicians well known in Quebec during the 1940's such as Maxime Raymond, Camilien Houde, Paul

Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult, but it also served as the training ground for several individuals such as André Laurendeau, Jean Drapeau, Michel Chartrand, and René Hamel, all who later continued significant, if divergent, careers in the political and intellectual life of Quebec. While primarily a movement of protest against Canadian involvement in the war, the Bloc also adopted a programme of social and economic reform within a nationalist framework. A study of the ideas on which the Bloc was based and of the personalities which shaped it can provide useful insights into the development of French Canadian nationalism at an important moment in its history.

The Bloc Populaire, like the Action Libérale Nationale which preceded it, was in many ways a reaction to changes which had taken place in Quebec since World War I. The rapid industrialization of Quebec during the 1920's produced changes with which the province was little ready to cope. By the 1930's rural Quebec had given way to urban Quebec, and the traditional values of French Canada such as the family, the agrarian ideal, the Roman Catholic religion, and la survivance were being threatened by the ills and problems of urbanization and industrialization.³ The economic liberalism advocated by the Liberal party in power in Quebec since 1897, and particularly of the regime of Alexandre Taschereau from 1920 to 1936, encouraged the rapid transformation of Quebec into an industrial and capitalist economy.⁴ A firm believer in the benefits to be derived from the industrial development of Quebec and completely opposed to state intervention in that development, Taschereau encouraged foreign capital to develop the province's rich natural resources through concessions such as land grants and tax

exemptions. The result was an industrial society composed primarily of large-scale, monopolistic industries owned and operated by English, American, and English-Canadian interests.⁵ While providing job opportunities for French Canadians, these industries offered them only a subordinate role. While managerial positions were occupied by English-speaking personnel, the lower paid jobs went to French Canadians:

The economic status of the majority of French Canadians changed from that of land-owning proprietors, or skilled artisans working in their own shops, to that of wage and salary earners working for an alien employer.⁶

Urbanized life threatened the solidarity of the family and the importance of the parish, basic institutions in traditional French Canadian society, and created social problems new to their social system. The Roman Catholic Church, which had traditionally provided for the social needs of its people, was ill-equipped to deal with the complex social problems of an industrialized society.⁷

During the 1920's opposition to the policies endorsed by the Taschereau government developed in two areas. Firstly, a small group of nationalist intellectuals, the Ligue d'Action Française, incorporated into its nationalist ideology a strong opposition to the foreign control of the province's resources and to the subordinate role of French Canadians in the economy of their own province.⁸ Secondly, several Catholic Action groups, sponsored by the hierarchy of the Roman Catholic Church to increase the influence of the Church in the changing society, also adopted strongly nationalistic attitudes towards the influence of foreign capital in Quebec.⁹ However, reaction

against the industrial development of the province during the prosperity of this decade was slight. The opposition of the nationalists, focused on foreign domination of the province's resources, found little popular support, and nationalism remained a phenomenon characteristic of the middle classes.¹⁰ Nor did the solutions proposed by the nationalists, such as a back to the land movement, encouragement of medium-sized French Canadian business, or promotion of the concept of professional corporatism, offer any realistic answers to the problems posed by urbanization.¹¹

The economic hardships of the depression increased the appeal of the nationalists' campaign for economic reform and resulted in the rapid expansion of the nationalist movement in French Canada.¹² As the problems of the depression worsened and the Taschereau administration produced no measures to alleviate them, non-governmental organizations took the initiative in the study of the province's social and economic ills. The most important source of social teaching during this period was the Ecole Sociale Populaire, a Jesuit organization formed to study social problems in Quebec.¹³ The Programme de Restauration Sociale, drawn up for the Ecole Sociale Populaire by a group of French Canadian laymen who had studied different aspects of the economic and social changes taking place in Quebec, appeared in the fall of 1933 and exerted an important influence on future responses to economic and social reform in the province. Combining the influences of French Canadian nationalism and European Catholicism, the Programme envisaged economic and social

reform through the restoration of agriculture, the institution of professional corporatism, and government intervention to curb the influence of "la dictature économique."¹⁴

However, during the 1930's an important core of opposition to Taschereau's economic liberalism developed within the provincial Liberal party itself. The revolt began with a group of young Montreal Liberals under the leadership of Paul Gouin, the son of former Liberal premier of Quebec, Sir Lomer Gouin.¹⁵ At first hoping to reform the Liberal party from within, by the early part of 1933 the group had decided that their only hope for instituting economic reform lay in independent political action and they formed a separate group, L'Action Libérale.¹⁶ Their concern for economic reform brought them into contact with a group of nationalists from Quebec City which included Dr. Philippe Hamel, René Chaloult, and Ernest Grégoire. Hamel, Chaloult, and Grégoire were above all nationalists and had had no previous association with the Liberal party in Quebec. While sharing the opposition of the Action Libérale towards the economic policies of the Taschereau regime, this group, and in particular Dr. Hamel, had become primarily involved in a campaign for the nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry in Quebec. In June of 1934 discussions took place between the Montreal group, the Quebec City nationalists, and dissident Liberal party members from Quebec City, Horace Philippon and Louis-Philippe Morin.¹⁷ The agreements resulting from these contacts resulted in the formation in July of 1934 of the Action Libérale Nationale.¹⁸ In addition to the dissident Liberal and nationalist elements, the Action Libérale Nationale also won the

support of Edouard Lacroix, wealthy lumberman and federal Liberal member for the Beauce.¹⁹

The Action Libérale Nationale manifesto appeared on 28 July outlining the platform of the new group.²⁰ Based on the Programme de Restauration Sociale, the manifesto pointed to rural restoration as the key to solving the problems of the province. Through support of measures such as farm credit, colonization, rural electrification, and the encouragement of secondary industry, the Action Libérale Nationale hoped to revive the agricultural industry and redress the imbalance between the rural and urban population of Quebec. The Action Libérale Nationale also pledged strong opposition to the exploitation of the province's resources by a small group of foreign capitalists. Labour reforms adopted by the movement included a labour code and legislation regulating minimum wages and maximum working hours. The manifesto also proposed the gradual introduction of professional corporatism. The platform of the Action Libérale Nationale in itself was not a revolutionary document: it only sought to reform the private enterprise system, not to create a new social order.²¹ However, certain of the reforms included in the manifesto, such as government sponsored social welfare schemes, appeared radical in the light of French Canadian tradition and thought.

While public support of the party broadened during the next year, the Action Libérale Nationale was completely unprepared for political action when on 29 October 1935 Premier Taschereau called an election for 25 November. Lacking in funds and

organization, and responding to pressure from prospective Action Libérale Nationale candidates, the Action Libérale Nationale entered into an alliance with the provincial Conservative party led by Maurice Duplessis.²² According to the agreement of 7 November 1935 by which the Union Nationale Gouin-Duplessis was formed, Duplessis endorsed the Action Libérale Nationale programme and agreed that two thirds of the constituencies would be represented by the candidates of the Action Libérale Nationale.²³

The election of 25 November elected forty-seven Liberal candidates and forty-two Union Nationale candidates. Of these Union Nationale candidates, twenty-six were associates of the Action Libérale Nationale; sixteen were former Conservatives.²⁴ During the next year the Union Nationale under the legislative leadership of Maurice Duplessis aggressively attacked the policies and practices of the Liberal party. The revelations of patronage and corruption among the Liberals brought out in the Public Accounts Committee were particularly damaging. Alexandre Taschereau resigned as premier and was replaced by Adélard Godbout on 11 June 1936. At the same time elections were called for 17 August.²⁵

During the preceding year considerable friction had developed between the two branches of the Union Nationale Duplessis-Gouin.²⁶ Paul Gouin and his supporters became increasingly suspicious that Duplessis intended to gradually assume control of the whole party. One week following the election announcement, Paul Gouin, prompted by Duplessis' refusal to observe their agreement of 7 November 1935 in the coming election, announced

his break with Duplessis.²⁷ The Action Libérale Nationale, he declared, was withdrawing from the Union Nationale. However, while Paul Gouin withdrew from the coalition, almost all of the Action Libérale Nationale group, including Philippe Hamel, René Chaloult, and Ernest Grégoire, remained with Duplessis. Edouard Lacroix supported the decision of Gouin to withdraw from the alliance.²⁸

In the June eleventh election, seventy-six Union Nationale candidates were elected. While twenty-eight of these had been former Action Libérale Nationale candidates the preceding year, only four former Action Libérale Nationale members were offered cabinet positions.²⁹ Dr. Philippe Hamel was not one of the four. Dr. Hamel and René Chaloult remained with Duplessis until February 1937 when, convinced that Duplessis would not introduce the social and economic reforms they supported, they also withdrew from the Union Nationale.³⁰

None of the Action Libérale Nationale elements completely rejected political action when they withdrew from the Union Nationale. In June 1937 Dr. Philippe Hamel, Ernest Grégoire, René Chaloult, and Oscar Drouin, a former Quebec Liberal and one of the original Action Libérale Nationale members in 1936, formed the Parti National, adopting a programme almost identical to that of the Action Libérale Nationale.³¹ The Action Libérale Nationale also tentatively resumed activity. However, Paul Gouin did not yet feel that the group should re-enter politics. Gouin's refusal to do so at that time resulted in a break with Edouard Lacroix in March 1937, when Gouin disagreed with Lacroix over Lacroix's

support of Vital Cliche in a provincial by-election in the Beauce.³² Gouin advised Lacroix to leave the field open to the candidate supported by Hamel's Parti National.³³ Lacroix, however, continued his support of Cliche and the three way fight which resulted ended in the election of the Duplessis candidate. Bitter feelings between Lacroix, and Hamel and Gouin persisted and were still clearly evident in 1942 when the Bloc Populaire was formed.

For the next year Paul Gouin conducted a non-partisan campaign outlining the social and economic reforms he supported.³⁴ Although discussions took place between the Action Libérale Nationale and the Parti National, questions of an organizational nature and bitter feelings remaining from Gouin's 1936 split with Duplessis prevented any agreement for a coalition.³⁵ Both groups refused offers of cooperation from the provincial Liberals who, in the spring of 1938, confirmed the choice of Godbout as their leader at a party convention.³⁶ Nor did the Sorel congress, a non-partisan gathering on 24 and 25 July for all groups who opposed the Liberal and Union Nationale parties, result in an agreement between the Action Libérale Nationale and the Parti National forces.³⁷ Both remained independent when Duplessis, protesting the centralization encouraged by the federal government as a result of power accorded it by the War Measures Act, called an election for 25 October 1939. The Action Libérale Nationale fielded candidates on much the same platform as in 1936.³⁸ However, the party obtained only 4.6% of the popular vote and less than 25,000 votes.³⁹

The 1939 election marked the demise of the Action Libérale

Nationale. Following the election, Paul Gouin wrote to a nationalist sympathizer that he was extremely sceptical about the immediate chances for success of the nationalist party in Quebec, but he remained convinced that "les idées que nous avons semées ne sont pas perdues, et qu'elles donneront, un jour ou l'autre, leur plein épanouissement."⁴⁰ Gouin's prediction proved to be accurate. While in 1939 the nationalist forces in Quebec remained divided and discouraged, three years later, stimulated by the intensive anticonscription campaign of March and April 1942, they would regroup and once again initiate a new nationalist party committed to social and economic reform in Quebec, the Bloc Populaire Canadien.

FOOTNOTES FOR INTRODUCTION

¹The writer feels that historian Mason Wade reveals this attitude, as exemplified in his comment in the French Canadians 1760-1967 (Toronto: Macmillan of Canada, 1968), p. 957, "Fortunately for Canadian unity, the Bloc Populaire proved to be anything but a Bloc." Herbert F. Quinn's comments on the Bloc Populaire in his book The Union Nationale (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1963), pp. 153-54, indicated a more serious attempt to understand the ideas which motivated the Bloc Populaire.

²P.E. Trudeau's comments on the Bloc would indicate that he attaches little significance to its efforts: "Le Bloc Populaire, en effet, était un curieux mélange d'espairs sociaux et d'argents conservateurs, sous l'étendard du nationalisme. ... Le Bloc sombra dans sa propre confusion, et avec lui disparut une autre tentative d'injecter quelques grains idéologiques dans nos discussions politiques." Pierre Elliot Trudeau, La Grève de L'Amiante (Montreal: Les Editions Cité libre, 1956), p. 70.

³A good but brief discussion of the changes experienced by Quebec during this period can be found in Quinn, op. cit., chaps. 1, 2, and 3. More complete discussions can be found in Jean-Charles Falardeau (ed.), Essais sur le Québec contemporain, (Quebec: Les Presses de l'université Laval, 1953), and in Everett C. Hughes, French Canada in Transition (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1943).

⁴Quinn, op. cit., p. 32.

⁵Ibid., p. 35.

⁶Ibid.

⁷Patricia Reid, "L'Action Libérale Nationale, 1934-39." (unpublished M.A. thesis, Queen's University, 1966), p. 21.

⁸Quinn, op. cit., p. 37. The Ligue d'Action Française was established in 1913 as the Ligue des Droits du Français by a group of followers of Henri Bourassa. It changed its name to the Ligue d'Action Française in 1918 and its interest expanded from concern over the use and rights of the French language to the promotion of the rights of French Canadians as a cultural group. The influence of Bourassa was evident in the programme supported by the Ligue: the defence of the rights of French Canadian minorities in other provinces; support of provincial autonomy; and opposition to close ties with Britain and involvement in British wars. The most well-known member of the Ligue d'Action Française of the 1920's was Abbé Lionel Groulx, ultra-nationalist and professor of history at the Université de Montréal.

⁹Ibid., p. 40. Included in this group of Catholic Action

organizations were the Confédération des Travailleurs Catholiques du Canada formed in 1921; the Union Catholique des Cultivateurs organized in 1924; the Caisses Populaires, or credit unions; and the Association Catholique de la Jeunesse Canadienne-Française (A.C.J.C.), a province-wide youth movement.

¹⁰Reid, op. cit., p. 32.

¹¹Ibid.

¹²Quinn, op. cit., p. 43.

¹³Reid, op. cit., p. 32.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 33. Those signing the Programme included: Albert Rioux, president of the Union Catholique des Cultivateurs; Esdras Minville, a professor at the Ecole des Hautes Etudes Commerciales in Montreal; Wilfrid Guérin, secretary of the Caisses Populaires for Montreal; and Quebec City nationalists Dr. Philippe Hamel and René Chaloult, both of whom were involved in a campaign for the nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry in Quebec. Although Paul Gouin was supposed to have worked on the Programme, he did not sign it.

¹⁵Ibid., p. 45. Born in 1898, Gouin was educated at the Seminary of Quebec City and later studied law at the University of Montreal. After serving in World War I, he practiced law for a few years with a Montreal firm. By the end of the 1920's he had given up law and become president and general manager of a publishing house, Louis Carrier and Co. Ltd. Gouin, by 1933, had been involved with French Canadian economists and sociologists for some time in a search for solutions to the problems of urbanization and industrialization in Quebec. Miss Reid describes Gouin as being "deeply rooted in the traditional nationalism as expounded by Groulx." (Ibid., p. 56) Gouin's concerns included colonization, rural electrification, control of the provinces' resources, and encouragement of medium sized industries, all conservative policies in line with traditional French Canadian nationalism.

¹⁶Ibid., p. 44. Other founding members of the Action Libérale included Jean Martineau, Roger Ouimet, Calixte Cormier, and Fred Monk.

¹⁷Ibid., p. 51. Philippon and Morin, as former Liberals, were always extremely distrustful of the nationalist element from Quebec City, in particular, of Dr. Philippe Hamel. (Ibid., p. 121)

¹⁸Ibid., p. 60. The word "Nationale" to the name of the group was added at the request of Dr. Hamel, and was apparently not popular with the Montreal group. (Ibid., p. 120) This underlines an important distinction between the two groups: the associates of Dr. Hamel such as René Chaloult and Ernest Grégoire

were above all nationalists; the Montreal group shared their interest in economic reform, but not the nationalist conviction on which it was based. The Montreal group was also very concerned with issues of social welfare and reforms in the fields of labour, finance, and education. (Ibid., p. 119) Once the Action Libérale Nationale was formed, L.-P. Morin became organizer for the party in the district of Quebec City, while Oscar Drouin became chief organizer. Horace Philippon was general secretary for the group. (Ibid., pp. 109-110)

¹⁹Ibid., p. 49. Lacroix's break with Taschereau was apparently motivated by Taschereau's refusal to honour an agreement that he had made with Lacroix in 1931, when Lacroix agreed to back the Liberal candidate in the provincial election in the Beauce on the condition that a Liberal administration would introduce an old age pension scheme, a system of provincial agricultural credit, and a minimum wage scale for workers. (Ibid., p. 36)

²⁰Ibid., pp. 64-77.

²¹Ibid., p. 69. According to Miss Reid, the Action Libérale Nationale, like the nationalism of the depression which influenced it, was "elitist and authoritarian" (Ibid., p. 41), a "strange amalgam of the traditional and the radical." (Ibid., p. 42)

²²Ibid., p. 128. The Action Libérale Nationale and the provincial Conservatives also shared common goals for reforms at that time. Like the Action Libérale Nationale, when the provincial Conservative party had adopted a new platform at their 1933 convention, they based it on the Programme de Restauration Sociale of the Ecole Sociale Populaire. (Ibid., p. 40) There had also been some co-operation between nationalists such as Hamel and the Quebec Conservatives in the early 1930's. When Duplessis ran for leader of the Quebec Conservatives, he was backed by nationalist Armand Lavergne. (Ibid., p. 39)

²³Ibid., p. 133.

²⁴Ibid., p. 140.

²⁵Ibid., p. 170.

²⁶Ibid., pp. 157-159.

²⁷Ibid., p. 171. Duplessis claimed that the agreement had applied only to the 1935 election.

²⁸Ibid., p. 176. Ernest Grégoire also made a radio speech in which he strongly criticized both Paul Gouin and his father, Sir Lomer Gouin, which greatly aroused Paul Gouin's anger. The hard feelings caused by this speech later impeded negotiations

to re-unite the two groups into a new Action Libérale Nationale.

²⁹Ibid., p. 184. Those offered cabinet posts were: Oscar Drouin - Lands and Forests; Bona Dussault - Agriculture; John Bourque - Public Works; and J.H.A. Pacquette - Provincial Secretary. Hamel apparently was offered and refused the Speakership of the Legislative Assembly, and a Ministry without Portfolio.

³⁰Ibid., p. 187.

³¹Ibid., p. 203.

³²Ibid., p. 194. Lacroix apparently harboured a great deal of resentment over Gouin's failure to support him in this instance, and later revealed a great deal of hostility towards Dr. Hamel for having supported a candidate against his own. This hostility was still very much alive in 1942 and 1943 when Lacroix and Hamel were both members of the Bloc Populaire.

³³Ibid., p. 195. Gouin, still hopeful about the possibilities of a reconciliation with those who had formed the Parti National, did not want to alienate Hamel.

³⁴Ibid., p. 208.

³⁵Ibid., pp. 204-7. Two main issues separated the two groups: the speech made by Ernest Grégoire in 1936 when Gouin broke with Duplessis and for which Gouin wanted a public apology; and Hamel's condition that he have complete control of the Quebec district, a condition which Paul Gouin was not willing to concede.

³⁶Ibid., p. 217. Apparently Lacroix considered for a time running as leader of the provincial Liberals. However, prior to the convention he issued a statement that he would not contend the leadership and would only attend the convention as a federal Liberal. His attendance at the convention marked his reconciliation with the provincial Liberals.

³⁷Ibid., p. 224. The congress was organized primarily by members of the Action Libérale Nationale, although they made it clear that it was to be a non-partisan gathering. Although representatives of the Parti National attended, it did not result in an alliance.

³⁸Ibid., p. 228. The platform was the same in basic principles, although some additional reforms were included.

³⁹Ibid., pp. 240-241. The Parti National did not enter candidates in the election. René Chaloult ran as a Liberal National.

⁴⁰Ibid., p. 248. A letter from Paul Gouin to M. Gravel, dated November 8, 1939.

CHAPTER I

THE FORMATION OF THE BLOC POPULAIRE CANADIEN

In September of 1942 the formation of a new independent party, the Bloc Populaire Canadien, was announced. While similar in many ways to its predecessor, the Action Libérale Nationale, the Bloc Populaire differed in one important aspect: it was both a provincial and a federal movement. While provincially the Bloc Populaire adopted many of the same reforms as had appeared in the Action Libérale Nationale manifesto of 1935, federally the Bloc was a party of protest against Canadian involvement in World War II. In fact, the formation of the Bloc Populaire in the fall of 1942 was a direct result of the increasing hostility of French Canadians towards Canadian involvement in the war and of their growing fear that involvement would result in the introduction of conscription.

Developments within French Canada following Canadian entry into the war in September of 1939 resulted in an atmosphere increasingly conducive to a nationalist revival. While French Canadians in general accepted Canadian participation in the war,¹ they remained resolutely opposed to the introduction of conscription.² However, nationalist opinion refused to accept even limited participation. The nationalists argued that Canada should remain neutral since her interests were not directly involved in

the conflict.³ Her participation, they maintained, would involve Canada in a struggle of conflicting European imperialisms and would only serve as a further indication of the vestiges of colonial ties between Canada and Great Britain.

An important factor in the acceptance of the war by French Canadians was the repeated assurance of their representatives at Ottawa that conscription would not be introduced. The results of the 1939 provincial election in Quebec would indicate that this assurance was accepted by French Canadians. Canadian involvement in the war became a central issue in the October twenty-fifth election and three federal cabinet ministers from Quebec, Ernest Lapointe, C.G. Power, and P.-J.-A. Cardin, played a significant role in the Liberal victory by actively campaigning for the provincial wing of the party. Effectively arguing that only strong French Canadian representation within the federal cabinet could prevent the introduction of conscription, the three federal members declared that they could only interpret a Liberal loss provincially as an indication that Quebec had lost confidence in the Liberal government, and threatened to resign their positions in the federal cabinet if Duplessis were re-elected.⁴ When the results were counted, Adélard Godbout's Liberals had not only defeated Duplessis' incumbent Union Nationale government, but had reduced its representation to fourteen members.⁵ Significantly, too, in the federal election the following March, Quebec, with one exception, elected Liberals as her representatives in the House of Commons.⁶

Nationalist opposition to the war effort increased as

time passed. The nationalist protest found eloquent expression in the pages of the Montreal daily newspaper, Le Devoir, under the direction of Georges Pelletier.⁷ Other nationalist spokesmen also appeared. René Chaloult increased his popularity in nationalist circles by introducing a motion in the Legislative Assembly opposing the National Resources Mobilization Act when it was introduced by the federal government in June of 1940.⁸ Camilien Houde, Montreal mayor and Independent member of the Legislature, seconded the Chaloult motion which, although defeated by the Liberals, gained the support of the Union Nationale. Later that summer Houde became even more outspoken in his opposition by advising French Canadians not to register as required by the Act and, as a result, was arrested and interned under the Defence of Canada Regulations.⁹ Petitions and meetings followed Houde's internment demanding his release. Sponsors of one such petition were Dr. Philippe Hamel and René Chaloult.¹⁰

Federally, Maxime Raymond, the Liberal member for Beauharnois-Laprairie, became a prominent critic of the government's war policy and an articulate representative of French Canadian nationalist sentiment in the House of Commons. First elected to the Commons in 1925, Raymond's first major opposition to Liberal policy came in 1937 when he spoke and voted against the Defence estimates of the government.¹¹ In 1939 Raymond vigourously spoke against the declaration of war and indicated his opposition to it by voting against the government on the reply to the speech from the throne on 9 September.¹² Although Raymond voted in favour of the National Resources Mobilization Act when it was introduced by

the government in June 1940, he justified his vote on the basis that the measure involved conscription for duty in Canada only.¹³ From 1940 to 1942 he continued his attacks on what he considered to be Canada's excessive contribution to the war effort.

As criticism of Quebec's contribution to the war effort increased and demands for conscription became more insistent within English Canada, the temper of French Canada became increasingly distrustful and resentful. With the death of Ernest Lapointe in November 1941 Quebec lost a very trusted and respected representative in Ottawa.¹⁴ The tenseness in Quebec increased when Prime Minister Mackenzie King announced in the speech from the throne in January 1942 that a plebiscite would be held on the issue of conscription for over-seas military service.¹⁵ Rather than asking for a direct acceptance or rejection of conscription, the plebiscite on 27 April would ask the electorate to release the government from the promises it had made against conscription for over-seas duty. A majority of "yes" votes in the plebiscite would leave the Liberal government free to determine their policy as the circumstances dictated.

The announcement of the plebiscite brought angry cries of betrayal from the anti-conscriptionist forces in Quebec, who accused the government of using the plebiscite as a ruse to back out of a promise made principally to that province. In the House of Commons Maxime Raymond twice spoke against the plebiscite¹⁶ and emerged as the spokesman for the growing number of French Canadian members who, as the debate on the measure continued, declared their opposition. Approval of the plebiscite would,

in effect, be given by the acceptance of the address in reply to the speech from the throne. However, eleven French Canadian members demonstrated their opposition to the plebiscite by voting for an amendment providing for the exemption from military service of those persons involved in agriculture, fishing, and the war industries, and calling on the government to keep the promises it had made to the people by respecting the mandate it had received from the electorate in 1940.¹⁷ Although the amendment was defeated, "le groupe des onze,"¹⁸ composed of ten dissident Liberals and the lone Conservative member from Quebec, was acclaimed by the nationalist press for having placed national interest before party dictates.

In the weeks preceding the plebiscite on 27 April the anti-conscriptionist forces led by Le Devoir actively campaigned for a negative vote from Quebec. National organizations of a usually non-political character, such as the Conseil Général de la Société Saint Jean-Baptiste in Montreal, the Association catholique de la Jeunesse canadienne-française (A.C.J.C.), and the Chambre de Commerce des Jeunes in Montreal, all advocated a "non" reply to the plebiscite.¹⁹ Shortly after the announcement of the plebiscite, at the suggestion of Abbé Lionel Groulx, a group of young nationalists which included Michel Chartrand, Roger Varin, and André Laurendeau, all graduates of the A.C.J.C., met at the home of Paul Gouin to plan an organized opposition to the plebiscite.²⁰ As a result of the meeting, the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada was formed to co-ordinate the campaign against the plebiscite. The Ligue combined the efforts of younger

nationalists such as Jean Drapeau and André Laurendeau, who was also director of the nationalist publication l'Action Nationale, with those of more experienced and well-known figures such as Dr. J.-B. Prince, prominent member of l'Action Nationale who became president of the Ligue, and Maxime Raymond and Georges Pelletier, both directors of the Ligue. The other directors of the Ligue included leaders of French Canadian and Catholic labour, business, and farm associations, indicating a strong potential influence for the Ligue among these groups.²¹ The interest of the students and the young intellectuals were represented by Roger Varin and Jean Drapeau, while André Laurendeau became secretary for the Ligue.

The Ligue held the first of a series of mass meetings on 11 February 1942 at the Marché Saint-Jacques in Montreal, when the venerable Henri Bourassa joined the other Ligue speakers such as Raymond and Dr. Prince.²² Other popular nationalists also rallied to the Ligue. Paul Gouin campaigned for a "non" vote under Ligue auspices, and in March Philippe Hamel announced his adherence.²³ At an assembly at the Palais Montcalm in Quebec City, Hamel appeared with Maxime Raymond and in his speech acclaimed Raymond as a nationalist leader in the tradition of Bourassa and Lavergne.²⁴ René Chaloult also joined the Ligue's campaign and in addition continued to oppose Canadian participation by introducing in the Quebec Legislature a third controversial motion opposing conscription.²⁵

On 26 April, the day before the plebiscite, the Ligue announced that it would remain in existence for the duration of

the war no matter what the result of the plebiscite might be.²⁶ If the result was a majority of "yes" votes, the Ligue would continue its opposition either to a law introducing conscription, or to the application of the provisions in such a law without a vote in Parliament. Even if Canada as a whole rejected conscription by a majority of "no" votes in the plebiscite, the Ligue intended to guard against "une sorte de coup d'état" against Mackenzie King by conscriptionist elements and which would result in the introduction of the measure against the will of Canadians.²⁷

The result of the plebiscite in Quebec, where the vote was seventy-two per cent against releasing the government from its commitments, encouraged the nationalists in their efforts.²⁸ Le Devoir, while hailing the result as a great victory for the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, also emphasized that a great deal of work remained to be done and that French Canadians should continue their support of the Ligue. According to Omer Héroux, the Ligue was "un noyau autour duquel on peut construire."²⁹

The possibility of prodding the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada directly into a political role was not overlooked. In Quebec City a group of former members of the Action Libérale Nationale met and agreed to undertake a campaign of letters to the Ligue urging it to political action.³⁰ Paul Gouin in particular hoped to convince the Ligue to accept a transformation into a political movement. This no doubt motivated his call of 15 May, made without prior consultation with the directors of the Ligue,³¹ for a congress of members of the French Canadian élite to formulate "les éléments d'une doctrine nationale" outside

traditional party lines.³² Since the Ligue already possessed the necessary organizational machinery, Gouin suggested that it sponsor this congress, "les grandes assises canadiennes-françaises." Although Gouin felt that public response to his suggestion was encouraging, he commented somewhat bitterly to a former Action Libérale Nationale collaborator on the lack of response on the part of the Ligue:

Je crains, toutefois, soit dit entre nous, que l'affaire ne marche pas. La Ligue n'a pas encore bougé et je crois comprendre que M. Raymond estime que d'ici la fin de la guerre il n'y a rien d'autre à faire que de parler contre la conscription tant et aussi longtemps qu'il sera possible de le faire.³³

By mid-June Gouin felt that it was evident that the Ligue would not act on his suggestion and that the nationalist leaders, by their inaction, had forfeited an almost unique opportunity for a new nationalist movement.³⁴ Although he felt that some method should be found to "forcer en quelque sorte la main au Devoir, à la Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, et aux chefs nationaux tels que M. Raymond, Hamel, etc.,"³⁵ he rejected the idea of independently convoquing such a congress because of lack of financial resources and organization.

The lack of response from the Ligue was probably due to the conviction of many of its members that the Ligue, in order to remain effective, had to retain its non-political character. One of the main advocates of this non-partisan stance of the Ligue was Georges Pelletier, editor of Le Devoir and one of the Ligue's directors.³⁶ In an address to a congress of the Ligue in Montreal on 24 May he clearly indicated his opposition to

political involvement for the Ligue.³⁷ Coming a little more than a week after Paul Gouin's proposal for a Ligue-sponsored French Canadian congress, it was an effective rebuff to those who wished to provide the Ligue with a more political orientation. In a communiqué printed in the June seventeenth edition of Le Devoir, the Ligue officially explained its position.³⁸ Pointing out that the Ligue had not been formed as a political party and that it had no intention of becoming one, the communiqué stated that the basis for Ligue action was "extra-politique," and that its function was to "enseigner la théorie et la pratique du civisme le plus élevé à ses adhérents et parmi tout le public."³⁹ While individual members of the Ligue retained their freedom of action, the communiqué warned that the Ligue itself must diligently guard against giving support to any one particular party.

Although the Ligue adamantly refused to become identified with any one particular party, the public response stimulated by the Ligue's campaign created renewed interest in direct political action. Many of the rumours concerning the formation of a new party indicated Maxime Raymond, prominent member of "le groupe des onze" as leader. Léopold Richer, the Ottawa correspondent for Le Devoir, had for some time been urging Raymond to profit from the circumstances and step into the role of nationalist leader of the French Canadians.⁴⁰ Philippe Hamel had also suggested that Raymond take the initiative in the formation of a new party.⁴¹ While Raymond had always refused such

suggestions because of his poor health, his co-operation with the provincial nationalists such as Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult in the Ligue resulted in renewed proposals for a movement under his leadership.⁴²

Several factors encouraged the choice of Maxime Raymond as leader of a new group at this time. While Raymond had never been one of the more prominent members of the Quebec delegation in Ottawa, he was well-respected and had enhanced his reputation since 1937 by his opposition to the Defence expenditures of the Government. While his nationalist convictions and admiration for Henri Bourassa were well known, Raymond was not labelled by any previous association with any one group of the provincial nationalists.⁴³ This presented a distinct advantage in view of the divisions which had developed within the nationalist ranks during the conflict between the Action Nationale Libérale and Duplessis in 1936. A man of independent means, Raymond also enjoyed the support of Georges Pelletier and, therefore, of Le Devoir.⁴⁴

There are strong indications that Maxime Raymond himself was considering the formation of a party at this time. Historian Robert Rumilly maintains that Raymond discussed the possibility with Edouard Lacroix and Dr. Pierre Gauthier, federal Liberal dissidents and two of the "groupe des onze", as early as the last months of 1941.⁴⁵ However, no concrete action was taken at that time. According to Rumilly, these discussions were continued after the plebiscite on 27 April. The proposal

discussed was Lacroix's and called for a party under the leadership of Raymond in which both himself and Pierre Gauthier would have considerable influence.⁴⁶ Raymond and Lacroix would share the financing of the party as well as the administration, with Raymond in charge at Montreal and Lacroix directing the organization in Quebec City. According to Rumilly, a firm agreement was reached between Raymond and Lacroix at some time prior to mid-June.⁴⁷ It is not clear if the details of the agreement were decided at that time, but it would appear that, by the summer, Raymond and Lacroix had established a partnership to form a new party.⁴⁸

While Paul Gouin had not succeeded in prompting the Ligue into political action, the nationalists did not relinquish the idea of a movement which would profit from the support created by the Ligue. During the summer of 1942 a new proposal which eventually resulted in the formation of the Bloc Populaire was put forward by Marie-Louis Beaulieu, a Quebec City lawyer who was a close friend of René Chaloult and a Ligue member in Quebec City.⁴⁹ Beaulieu felt that French Canadians should profit from the reaction to the plebiscite to form "un mouvement de reconstruction économique, de réorganisation sociale et d'émancipation politique" which would follow in the Bourassa tradition.⁵⁰ Unlike previous attempts, the movement envisaged by Beaulieu would be active both federally and provincially. The movement would group together the various nationalist elements in Quebec under the leadership of Maxime Raymond, with Paul Gouin and Dr. Philippe Hamel as his "lieutenants" in the

districts of Montreal and Quebec respectively.⁵¹

Beaulieu first discussed his plans for such a movement with Paul Gouin on 23 May 1942 during a visit to Montreal for a congress of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada.⁵² During the interview at which Beaulieu outlined his proposal, the idea of "une équipe de trois" to direct the movement was discussed at length and Beaulieu emphasized that Raymond as leader would have complete authority. Gouin unhesitatingly offered his support for the project, even in the event that he himself did not occupy one of the positions as lieutenant. When Gouin reported to Beaulieu that Georges Pelletier strongly opposed political involvement for the Ligue, Beaulieu replied that his idea was not to transform the Ligue into a political party, but rather to form an independent nationalist movement distinct from the Ligue.⁵³ Next Beaulieu described his plan to his friend René Chaloult on 26 May and Chaloult's response was similarly enthusiastic. Chaloult also mentioned that Jean Martineau, a former member of the Action Libérale Nationale, might possibly be interested in such a formation.⁵⁴

The project was not presented to Maxime Raymond until 20 June when Beaulieu was again in Montreal and joined Paul Gouin and Maxime Raymond for lunch at the Queen's Hotel.⁵⁵ During the rather long meeting, Beaulieu described his idea to Raymond as he had done previously to Gouin and René Chaloult: a nationalist movement in the Bourassa tradition which would combine federal and provincial involvement under the leadership of Raymond, with Paul Gouin and Philippe Hamel as lieutenants.

Raymond seemed far from enthusiastic about the proposal and Gouin and Beaulieu left the encounter with opposing impressions of Raymond's reaction: Gouin felt that he would refuse; Beaulieu more optimistically felt that he would accept.⁵⁶ Acting on his own conviction, Beaulieu continued his overtures to the key figures involved.

Dr. Philippe Hamel was the last to be contacted, perhaps because Beaulieu expected to find him more reluctant than either Paul Gouin or René Chaloult. Dr. Hamel was a dentist by profession whose opposition to the electricity trust had led him into politics and his involvement with Paul Gouin in the founding of the Action Libérale Nationale in 1935. Discouraged by his association with Duplessis in 1936 and by his own failure to win support as the leader of the Parti National from 1937 to 1939, Hamel had declared his reluctance to resume political activity.⁵⁷

Beaulieu discussed his plan with Dr. Hamel on 26 June and at first Hamel repeatedly refused his collaboration.⁵⁸ However, after some discussion, Dr. Hamel accepted the idea on the stipulation that, as a further guarantee that the defeat of 1936 would not be repeated, he would be recognized as one of Raymond's lieutenants. Dr. Hamel also differed with Beaulieu over the question of a written platform, which Hamel believed should be drawn up prior to the announcement of a new party. Beaulieu disagreed, although his reasoning that, "nous avons tous la même doctrine, nous poursuivons le même but, des différences de tendances ne devraient pas nous diviser,"⁵⁹ showed a surprising lack of understanding of the differences

within the nationalist ranks, particularly in view of the divisions which had occurred in 1936. In the end Hamel was persuaded to participate in further preliminary discussions with Gouin and Raymond, during which Raymond would be formally asked to accept the leadership of the new movement.

The nationalist fervour stimulated in Quebec by the plebiscite was sustained after 27 April by more meetings sponsored by the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada. As a result of a speech given at one such assembly on 19 May in Montreal, René Chaloult was charged with sedition under the Defence of Canada Regulations. The trial which followed not only earned Chaloult considerable sympathy, but also further publicized the nationalist cause. After several adjournments the trial began in Montreal before Judge Archambault on 6 July. Marie-Louis Beaulieu was present acting as advisory counsel to Philippe Monette and Fernand Choquette, Chaloult's defence lawyers, both from Quebec City. Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel and Maxime Raymond were among the spectators.⁶⁰ Extensive coverage of the proceedings was provided by Le Devoir.

Since the key figures in Beaulieu's plan were gathered in Montreal for the trial, Beaulieu and Paul Gouin profitted from the opportunity to arrange a meeting of all concerned. The meeting took place on 11 July at Maxime Raymond's country home at Woodlands, and was attended by Raymond, Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, René Chaloult, and Jean Martineau.⁶¹ Marie Louis Beaulieu again outlined his proposal, but the result of the discussions remained indecisive. Maxime Raymond refused to commit himself

either for or against the proposed party, although he did not voice any objections to the project as conceived by Beaulieu.⁶²

On 3 August René Chaloult was acquitted of the charges against him. In a packed courtroom which included Maxime Raymond among the spectators, Judge Archambault declared that although the content of Chaloult's speech had in fact been seditious, the intent of the speaker had not. That afternoon Raymond again met with Beaulieu and stipulated the conditions under which he might be willing to assume the leadership of a new party.⁶³ Raymond's primary objection was any possible division of the authority of the leader. Protesting that he was not seeking dictatorial powers, he argued that unity and discipline within the party required only one leader with absolute authority. As a result Raymond expressed doubts about the advisability of the idea of a team of three to direct the new movement. Although Beaulieu replied that the point was in his opinion a matter of procedure and not fundamental, he still left without a firm commitment from Raymond, the prospective leader.

The Ligue pour la Défense du Canada had opened a public subscription campaign to help cover the expenses of the trial of René Chaloult and, on news of the acquittal, announced a public banquet in Chaloult's honour to be held in Montreal on 12 August.⁶⁴ Public interest in the banquet increased as various newspapers predicted that the occasion would mark the formation of a new political party under the direction of either Maxime Raymond or René Chaloult.⁶⁵ An estimated fifteen hundred guests gathered

on a hot, sultry evening at the Marché Atwater to applaud the guest of honor and the other guest speaker, Maxime Raymond.⁶⁶

Paul Gouin and Philippe Hamel, who also received an enthusiastic reception from the crowd, were guests of honor at the head table, as were several of the directors of the Ligue, the lawyers who had represented René Chaloult (including Marie-Louis Beaulieu), and Wilfrid Lacroix, federal member for Quebec-Montmorency and one of the "onze."⁶⁷

Although the banquet produced no formal announcement of a new party, Le Devoir strongly hinted that it would result in "un nouveau mouvement politique destiné apparemment à prendre une grande ampleur dans la province de Québec."⁶⁸ Maxime Raymond, Paul Gouin, René Chaloult, and Philippe Hamel were mentioned as the nucleus of the new movement. Indications from the banquet could be interpreted to support the prediction of Le Devoir, particularly the statement by Maxime Raymond that "il est plus important que jamais de rassembler nos forces, de les grouper, de faire cause commune entre tous les bons éléments de chez nous."⁶⁹ Raymond's words strongly indicate that he had fully accepted the idea of a new party grouping all the oppositionist elements in the province.

Georges Pelletier, commenting editorially on the Chaloult banquet in Le Devoir, welcomed Raymond's declaration as an indication of support for a new party from Raymond and emphasized the need for such a movement:

Nous n'avons plus à Ottawa depuis des années, que les vaines apparences d'un gouvernement canadien, du gouvernement responsable. ... Quant à Québec, le régime présent est

le moins québécois, le moins libre, le plus opportuniste, le plus féroce**ment** bête, le plus imbécilement soumis à des exigences extérieures, le plus fermé à toute idée nationale pour de bon, que notre province ait jamais eu.⁷⁰

While not definitely committing himself, Pelletier promised support of "tout mouvement de réforme sincère, intelligente, bien orientée, vraiment canadienne,⁷¹ which would work in the interests of both Canadians and French Canadians. Le Devoir would willingly collaborate, he continued, with those whose aim was the liberation of Quebec from those influences, either interior or exterior, "qui nous paraîtrait déplacée."⁷²

Pelletier's editorial concluded with the strongly nationalist exclamation, "Le Canada aux Canadiens, le Québec aux Québécois!"

After the banquet the deliberations on the formation of the party became more productive. On 13 August, the day following the banquet, Raymond met with Beaulieu and indicated that he would accept the leadership of the new movement.⁷³ They agreed to hold a meeting as soon as possible between Raymond and those whom Beaulieu considered to be Raymond's "principaux collaborateurs," Hamel, Gouin, and Chaloult. During this meeting, Raymond would formally accept the leadership and explain his concept of the movement.

Beaulieu also met again with Dr. Hamel and subsequently wrote to Raymond that everything had gone perfectly.⁷⁴ As a result of Beaulieu's meeting with Hamel, Hamel had agreed that Raymond would have full authority as leader. Too optimistically Beaulieu added:

Il n'y a pas de groupe Hamel; il n'y a pas de groupe Gouin; il n'y a pas de partisans de Gouin et pas d'avantage de

partisans d'Hamel à Québec, à Montréal, ou ailleurs. ... Le passé est effacé ... nous partons en neuf.⁷⁵

René Chaloult, too, was encouraged by the progress although he reported to Abblé Groulx that he anticipated the forthcoming encounter between Hamel and Raymond with some trepidation.⁷⁶

Chaloult expected that the contentious point would be the question of the nationalization of electricity, the topic which for years had been Dr. Hamel's specialized area of interest.

Chaloult feared that Raymond, "un homme de loi, de tradition, et de mesure," would not accept as part of the party's platform Hamel's proposal for the immediate nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry.⁷⁷

However, considerable progress had been made by this time towards the formation of a nationalist movement. Much of this progress was due to the efforts of Marie-Louis Beaulieu, who had acted as a tactful and persuasive liaison between Raymond, and Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult. Paul Gouin had eagerly accepted the idea of a new party after the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada had failed to respond to his suggestions that it become more politically oriented. Dr. Philippe Hamel, on the other hand, had shown considerable reluctance to commit himself to the proposed movement. Wary after his betrayal by Duplessis in 1936, Hamel based his acceptance on the condition that he be named one of the "lieutenants" of the leader. René Chaloult, while perhaps less eager than Paul Gouin, also willingly agreed to discuss the possibility of joining Raymond in a nationalist party.

Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult all apparently accepted the idea of Maxime Raymond as the leader of the proposed group. Although following 1939, neither Paul Gouin nor Philippe Hamel had completely rejected the idea of a nationalist party committed to social and economic reform,⁷⁸ neither seem to have seriously considered the possibility of initiating such a movement in 1942, either together or independently. Nor did either actively solicit the leadership of such a movement. Discouraged by their failure to win popular support for either the Action Libérale Nationale or the Parti National in 1939, Gouin and Hamel no doubt realized that a successful movement would require a broader base of support than that on which they had been able to depend. Severely limited financially,⁷⁹ they were perhaps also aware that the provincial nationalists were seriously divided and hoped that an outside element, such as Raymond, could succeed in uniting them. Not only could Raymond offer financial support for the group, but also Raymond as leader would increase the possibility of winning the tacit support of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, of which both Raymond and Georges Pelletier were directors.

However, while Paul Gouin and Dr. Hamel accepted the idea of Raymond as the leader of the proposed party, both supported Beaulieu's idea that they be considered the "lieutenants" of Raymond. Dr. Hamel had been particularly firm in his insistence that he wanted a voice in the leadership of the party as a guarantee against a repetition of 1936. While Gouin had indicated that he was more flexible on this point, both he and Marie-Louis

Beaulieu considered the three provincial nationalists to be the "principaux collaborateurs" of Raymond.

Beaulieu's proposal for a triumvirate composed of Raymond, Gouin, and Hamel under the over-all leadership of Raymond, had been rejected by Raymond. Raymond would agree to accept the leadership only on the condition that there be only one leader. This difference of opinion between Hamel and Raymond clearly indicated the possibility of further conflict before a final agreement on the party would be reached.

It is also clear that Raymond had not at any time during his preliminary discussion with Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult, mentioned to them his agreement with Edouard Lacroix to join Lacroix in the establishment of a new party. Nor did he reveal that he had discussed with Lacroix the possibility of accepting Lacroix's financing for such a movement. In view of the bitter feeling remaining between Lacroix, and Gouin and Hamel as a result of the 1937 by-election in the Beauce,⁸⁰ the omission of this information strongly indicates that Raymond felt it would adversely affect his negotiations with Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult.⁸¹

André Laurendeau, secretary of the Ligue, accurately described the state of negotiations when he wrote to Gérard Filion, one of the Ligue directors, on 1 September about the new movement:

Depuis un mois j'ai assisté à je ne sais combien de réunions et il n'a pas été facile de mettre tous les violons d'accord. En un moment, le fruit paraît mûr, et je crois qu'il est à la veille de tomber.⁸²

Laurendeau's prediction was accurate. The key figures agreed to meet the afternoon of 2 September in Quebec City.⁸³ The uneasiness of the situation was indicated by a discussion between Paul Gouin and Marie-Louis Beaulieu the morning of the second. Paul Gouin expressed his strong dissatisfaction over the alteration of the principle of a three member team to direct the movement.⁸⁴ Since he was no longer sure exactly what his role in the new party would be, Gouin indicated that he was reconsidering his decision to join. Beaulieu, however, managed to persuade Gouin to put his doubts aside.

The meeting on the afternoon of 2 September at the home of René Chaloult was a crucial step in the formation of the Bloc Populaire. While the meeting ended without a firm commitment from either Dr. Hamel or Raymond, the discussions that afternoon provided a frank examination of the problems involved. According to Philippe Hamel, it was during this encounter that "le Bloc vit laborieusement le jour."⁸⁵

The meeting at Chaloult's included Maxime Raymond, Marie-Louis Beaulieu, Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, René Chaloult, and Jean Martineau, a collaborator of Gouin in the Action Libérale Nationale and one of the few to follow Gouin when he left Duplessis in 1935.⁸⁶ A considerable amount of mistrust marked the proceedings and Dr. Hamel was particularly concerned over the lack of attention given the aims of the new group.⁸⁷ After some preliminary discussion, the group turned to an examination of a nineteen point programme which Hamel had drawn up on his own initiative the previous evening.⁸⁸ This programme

would commit the movement to the support of agriculture, co-operatives, the corporate system, and small industries. It also called for the abolition of the Legislative Council and prompt nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry, with payment to the owners of the enterprises to follow based only on the real value of the enterprise.⁸⁹ Organizationally it provided for the division of the province into sections, each presided over by a lieutenant named by the leader of the party.⁹⁰ A further stipulation was made by Hamel in connection with the district of Quebec, where he proposed that the choice of candidates for any election, before being presented to the leader for final acceptance, would first be approved by a committee of five.⁹¹

Hamel's proposed programme prompted considerable debate among the group. Beaulieu and Raymond first objected to the provision for a five-member committee for the district of Quebec.⁹² At this point Raymond mentioned that Edouard Lacroix was also a member of the new party,⁹³ and objected to this provision because Lacroix, the federal member for the Beauce which was in the Quebec district, would not consent to it.⁹⁴ More misunderstanding revolved around the idea of the division of the province into sections administered by lieutenants to the leader. Hamel still considered this triumvirate "une condition de sécurité indispensable" and felt that Gouin and Chaloult agreed with him.⁹⁵ Beaulieu, however, was under the impression that "il ne fut pas véritablement question de premier lieutenant à Québec ou à Montréal. Je dirai même qu'il résultait de l'ensemble de la conversation que cette formule était abandonnée."⁹⁶

The rest of the discussion centered on the question of the nationalization of electricity and again Hamel received little support for his proposed method of nationalization.⁹⁷ At this point Hamel became discouraged and withdrew his programme.

Raymond, he felt, "ne voulait pas de programme. Il n'en voyait pas la nécessité."⁹⁸ Beaulieu expressed the opinion that there was general opposition to the programme which Dr. Hamel had presented and offered to incorporate it with various preliminary studies which he had made.⁹⁹ Although Hamel accepted Beaulieu's suggestion, Hamel refused to join the group at that time.

Raymond's refusal to accept a written platform for the new party and the group's failure to endorse Hamel's proposals for the nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry weakened his confidence in the new movement.¹⁰⁰ While Raymond indicated that Hamel's refusal increased his own doubts,¹⁰¹ he did not reflect long on his decision. On 8 September Le Devoir announced that the following day Maxime Raymond would make a statement concerning rumours of a new party.¹⁰²

Raymond's long-awaited announcement of 9 September provided little more than the essential details about the new formation:

Sollicité de toutes parts par de nombreuses personnes, chefs de groupes et particuliers, appartenant à diverses classes de la société, j'ai accepté de diriger un nouveau mouvement politique dans la province, lequel exercera ses activités dans le domaine provincial et dans le domaine fédéral.¹⁰³

Further details, including the name of the new party, Raymond's statement continued, would be provided during a radio address,

the date for which was not announced. The wording of Maxime Raymond's announcement is significant, particularly in view of the discussions which had preceded it between Raymond and Lacroix, and Raymond and the provincial nationalists. Raymond made it perfectly clear in his statement that, in agreeing to accept the leadership of the new party, he was responding to pressure from several directions. His obligation was a moral one to the nationalist cause, not a personal one to any particular group or individual. No mention was made of a close collaboration with Paul Gouin and René Chaloult, which, in view of the complicated negotiations which just concluded, might have been expected. However, equally significant, was the lack of mention of co-operation with Edouard Lacroix, with whom Raymond had also reached an agreement. At the same time Raymond did not eliminate support from either direction. Publicly Raymond was leaving himself free of commitments, an action quite in character with Raymond's independent nature.

Raymond's statement brought varied reaction from political figures in Quebec. P.-J.-A. Cardin, who had left the federal cabinet on 11 May 1942 in protest over the introduction of Bill 80 which removed all restrictions against conscription for overseas duty, refused to comment.¹⁰⁴ Liguori Lacombe,¹⁰⁵ federal member from Laval-Deux Montagnes who had broken with the Liberal party after the announcement of the plebiscite, also refused to indicate his reaction to the new party.¹⁰⁶ Paul Gouin understandably expressed satisfaction over the new formation, commenting that he had been among those who had encouraged

Maxime Raymond to accept the responsibility.¹⁰⁷ In a statement released the day after Raymond's announcement, Gouin further stated that he not only intended to take an active part in the organization of the new group, but also expected to be a candidate in the next provincial election.¹⁰⁸ Marie-Louis Beaulieu also publicly announced his membership in the new movement and declared his willingness to be a candidate for the new party.¹⁰⁹ René Chaloult reserved his declaration of support for Raymond's party until 13 September before a large gathering of his constituents at Sainte-Croix.¹¹⁰ The reaction of his constituents to Chaloult's speech, which concentrated on an attack on the "dictature économique" within the province, indicated their support for his decision.¹¹¹

However, neither Edouard Lacroix nor Dr. Pierre Gauthier immediately announced their support for Raymond. Yet, in a letter to Raymond on 20 September, Gauthier clearly indicated that he considered himself a member of Raymond's new party.¹¹² He also indicated some satisfaction over the hesitation of Dr. Philippe Hamel, who still had not agreed to join the party. Commenting on Hamel's hesitation, Gauthier expressed the opinion that "il se fait dans le moment une élimination très heureuse pour nous. Certaines hésitations ou abstentions nous apportent du matériel nouveau et d'autant plus précieux pour notre mouvement."¹¹³ Although Lacroix personally made no statement regarding Raymond's party, a news release in Le Devoir on 26 September reporting a visit to Quebec City by Raymond, stated that Lacroix had been a member of the movement from the

beginning.¹¹⁴ However, the first week in October Dr. Gauthier expressed concern to Raymond that neither Raymond nor Lacroix had announced Lacroix's membership in the new group.¹¹⁵

The most logical explanation for Lacroix's silence is that the details of his agreement with Raymond were not complete. In view of Raymond's independent yet cautious nature, while he might agree to co-operate with Lacroix in the establishment of a new party, it is unlikely that Raymond would commit himself to Lacroix to the extent of accepting his financial support until he had definitely decided to accept the leadership of a new group. Yet the agreement for financial support between Raymond and Lacroix was reached before the end of 1942¹¹⁶ and subsequent events would indicate that it had been concluded by the end of October.¹¹⁷ It is highly possible that discussion between Raymond and Lacroix as to the nature of this agreement retarded any announcement of Lacroix's membership in the party.¹¹⁸

There are also indications that Maxime Raymond unsuccessfully solicited the support of the other dissident federal Liberals from Quebec. At the suggestion of Maxime Raymond, Dr. Pierre Gauthier invited the members of the "groupe des onze" to a meeting at the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City for the evening of 2 September.¹¹⁹ Significantly, this was the same day on which Raymond had met with Gouin, Chaloult, Hamel, Martineau, and Beaulieu to discuss the formation of a new movement. Gauthier did not indicate in the invitation the reason for the meeting, only that it concerned "une question d'une grande importance," and requested the greatest discretion

be observed. While no indication was found of the nature of the discussion which took place the evening of 2 September, nor of how many of the "onze" were present, it is probably safe to assume that the main topic was a proposal from Raymond that they join him in an independent party. However, Raymond's announcement on 9 September provoked no public response from the uncommitted members of the group of eleven dissidents.¹²⁰

Very little new information about the new party was released during the month that followed Raymond's announcement of 9 September. Finally, during a radio broadcast on 11 October, Raymond revealed the name of his new party and outlined the programme which it would support. The name of the new movement, Raymond announced, was the Bloc Populaire Canadien.¹²¹ The Bloc Populaire Canadien had been formed, he explained, because the people of Quebec, after years of deception, had lost confidence in the old parties, and because he, personally, had lost faith in the Liberal party. The plebiscite had clearly indicated that no ideological differences separated the Liberal and Conservative parties, and that neither responded to the needs of French Canada:

Spontanément, des citoyens se sont groupés en marge de ces deux organisations vermoulues, et leur premier succès fut le résultat dans Québec du plébiscite, le 27 avril dernier. Cette heureuse initiative, cet heureux commencement ne pouvait pas demeurer sans lendemain.¹²²

The strength of the Bloc Populaire would rest in its combined action in both the federal and provincial fields, Raymond continued. Frequently attempts for reform in Quebec failed for the lack of support from a cohesive group in Ottawa. Raymond

explained that the representatives of the party elected to Ottawa would be responsible for the interests of Canada as a whole, but in particular for those of French Canada. However, because of the importance of the economic and social aspects of French Canadian culture, which come under the jurisdiction of the province, the Bloc Populaire would, in addition, attempt to form the government at the provincial level:

Moins que toute autre, notre province ne peut se payer le luxe d'une politique qui, par esprit de parti, compromette ou détruise à Ottawa ce qui se fait à Québec ou vice versa.¹²³

Raymond specified that the programme of the Bloc Populaire was based on the premise that Canada "est un pays chrétien ... qui doit être gouverné comme un pays chrétien."¹²⁴ Federally, since Confederation had been a pact between the founding nationalities, the Bloc Populaire would be a staunch supporter of provincial autonomy in opposition to the centralizing tendencies of the government at Ottawa; provincially, the party would give priority to "le capital humain" by emphasizing a "politique familiale" which would be designed to provide more adequately for the large French Canadian families. The Bloc Populaire would support assistance to the rural economy to encourage rural life, but Raymond also added that attention would be given to the problems of urban living, particularly in the areas of health, slum clearance, and employment. Raymond pledged his party's support to the co-operative movement, to the labour unions, and to the exploitation of the natural resources of the province for the greater benefit of the people.

The Bloc Populaire would also emphasize the distinct cultural identity of French Canada, he maintained:

Nous exigerons que notre jeunesse soit formée en liaison étroite avec son pays, sa province, son histoire, sa culture, prête à collaborer, par toute son intelligence et toute son énergie, à la prospérité et à la mission de sa terre.¹²⁵

Raymond concluded by extending an invitation to join the Bloc to all those who, no matter what their social or political background, were convinced that the time had come to "régénérer la politique du Québec, de susciter une ère nouvelle."¹²⁶ The inspiration of the Bloc Populaire Canadien would be the motto: "Le Canada aux Canadiens, le Québec aux Québécois!"¹²⁷

While offering only a brief summary of the policies which the Bloc would pursue, Raymond clearly indicated that the Bloc would continue in the nationalist tradition. While its federal policies such as the protest against the war and defence of provincial autonomy revealed the influence of Henri Bourassa, the provincial platform of the Bloc, with its concern for agriculture, the family, co-operatives, and national consciousness, clearly derived from the nationalist social and economic reforms proposed in the 1930's.

Raymond's speech on 11 October outlining the major concerns of the party was a major step in the establishment of the Bloc Populaire. However, a tremendous amount of work still faced the party if it seriously intended to challenge the established political formations both federally and provincially. The most immediate need of the new movement was a basic organization to carry out the administrative and political functions of the party. As this structure slowly took form.

the first signs of the internal discord which was to plague the Bloc throughout its existence also appeared.

On 13 October, just two days after Maxime Raymond's radio broadcast, an article in Le Devoir announced the party's first public rally. The inauguration of the party, Le Devoir reported, would take place near the end of October at Saint-Georges de Beauce, where Paul Gouin had officially initiated the campaign of the Action Libérale Nationale in 1935.¹²⁸ The chosen site was, significantly, in the heart of the constituency of Edouard Lacroix. Among the speakers who would join Maxime Raymond for the occasion Le Devoir named Paul Gouin, René Chaloult, Edouard Lacroix, and "d'autres députés fédéraux, ceux du groupe des 'onze' qui sont du B.P.C."¹²⁹ Specifically the article mentioned only Dr. Pierre Gauthier, federal member for Portneuf, as one of this group, but the implication that others would attend reflected many rumours that more of the dissident federal members of Parliament from Quebec would rally to the Bloc Populaire.¹³⁰ In spite of the promising tone of the announcement, no specific date for the proposed rally had yet been set when, on 27 October, the Bloc announced the opening of its party headquarters in Montreal.¹³¹

On 27 October Maxime Raymond also announced that he had designated Dr. Pierre Gauthier as chief organizer of the Bloc Populaire for the district of Quebec.¹³² The naming of Dr. Gauthier, federal member for Portneuf, to this position was the first major appointment made by Raymond from among the Bloc ranks. It is interesting to note that Raymond's choice of

organizer was taken from the federal rather than the provincial contingent of the Bloc,¹³³ and it was one which was sure to receive the approval of Edouard Lacroix.

Paul Gouin was definitely one of the more eager and optimistic Bloc members during this initial stage of development. Not only was he among the first to announce his membership in the new party, but he was also among the first to solicit public support for the Bloc. On 18 October Gouin, speaking during a radio broadcast on behalf of the Bloc Populaire, emphasized his confidence in the future of the new movement and in its leader, Maxime Raymond.¹³⁴ His speech indicated no doubt on the part of Gouin similar to that experienced by his colleague, Dr. Philippe Hamel. Explaining that by joining the Bloc he was merely continuing to support the same cause and ideals as before, Gouin described his participation in the Bloc Populaire as a more effective means of working towards the realization of unity among French Canadians. He then turned to a theme popular in French Canadian nationalism, that of a "national" leader who would unite all French Canada, and hailed Maxime Raymond as the new "chef" of the French Canadian people:

Oui, mesdames et messieurs, il est temps qu'un chef national paraisse et il est temps qu'autour de lui s'unissent tous ceux qui croient encore qu'il reste quelque chose à sauver et qui sont prêts à consentir les sacrifices nécessaires. Maxime Raymond est ce chef national.¹³⁵

According to Gouin, Maxime Raymond's seventeen years as a representative of French Canada at Ottawa had demonstrated his qualifications for the position. In particular Paul Gouin emphasized Raymond's efforts on behalf of farmers and labor,

and his persistent campaign for the recognition of equal rights for French Canada in Confederation.¹³⁶ The conclusion of Gouin's speech was an eloquent plea for unity, words which would later be used against him when he, himself, had broken with his "chef":

A cette tâche sacrée, nul n'a le droit de se dérober. Aucun prétexte, aucune reculade ne trouvera grâce devant l'histoire. Les formations partisanses actuellement existantes doivent se fondre pour faire place à la discipline rigoureuse sans laquelle tout est perdu.¹³⁷

René Chaloult, another prominent Bloc member who still enjoyed immense popularity as a result of his trial and acquittal that summer, drew a large and enthusiastic audience to the Monument National the evening of 22 October when he delivered the second in a series of lectures sponsored by the Ligue d'Action Nationale.¹³⁸ Although the account of the address in Le Devoir referred to Chaloult as one of the leaders of the Bloc Populaire, his speech contained no direct references to the new political formation. The contents of his speech, however, were of a distinct political nature. After retracing the history of many of the issues significant in the development of the nationalist cause, Chaloult concluded his speech by condemning the traditional Conservative and Liberal parties as opportunist, indifferent, and indistinguishable from the point of view of doctrine:

Nos partis sont des frères jumeaux, que leur mère elle-même, la dictature économique étrangère, qui les allaite pourtant tous les jours, ne saurait reconnaître ...¹³⁹

In spite of the fact that the traditional parties repeatedly revealed their insensitivity to the problems of French Canada, French Canadians remained tied to traditional party affiliations,

rendering ineffective any attempt to reach a political solution to their problems. However, Chaloult continued, French Canadians should not abandon political activity, but rather base their political involvement on nationalist considerations -- undertaking a "régénération politique" based on a "véritable révolution spirituelle:"

Puisque c'est la politique qui nous a perdus, eh bien, que la politique nous sauve; mais la vraie politique, cette fois, celle qui s'inspire de générosité et de dévouement à la patrie, celle, Mesdames et Messieurs, que votre sens national et social assure pour notre libération.¹⁴⁰

This was precisely the type of political realignment advocated by the Bloc Populaire and it would not be difficult to view the Bloc as the vehicle for this nationalist revival. The presence in the Bloc of well-known nationalists such as Raymond, Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult indicated the strong possibility that the Bloc would win the support of those in nationalist circles. Several prominent nationalists, including Abbé Groulx, were in Chaloult's audience that evening.¹⁴¹ Whatever the reactions of the members of the Ligue d'Action Nationale as individuals, the Ligue itself adopted a sympathetic yet neutral attitude towards the Bloc Populaire. André Laurendeau, editor of L'Action Nationale, declared in the November edition of the magazine that the journal would not become the official organ of the Bloc Populaire, a relationship, he pointed out, which the party had not solicited.¹⁴² While it was too early to form a definitive opinion of the new party, Laurendeau expressed sympathy for a political formation which "dans ses éléments essentiels ... est authentiquement

nouveau."¹⁴³ He also commented favourably on the platform of the Bloc, noting in particular its emphasis on the role of the family, and on the personal qualities of leader Maxime Raymond. However, the party would not earn the approval of L'Action Nationale on this basis alone:

Malgré notre sympathie pour les idées et pour les hommes qui dirige le Bloc Populaire Canadien, un Philippe Hamel, un Paul Gouin, un René Chaloult, c'est aux actes qu'en définitive nous jugerons leur mouvement. ... Mais ... si l'Action Nationale refuse d'être un partisan aveugle, ou même un partisan aux yeux ouverts, elle estime que la naissance du Bloc est pour le Canada un événement favorable.¹⁴⁴

Publicly the Bloc Populaire reflected only optimism and confidence about its future, but this optimism was not shared by all observers. According to Horace Philippon, a former colleague of Paul Gouin in the Action Libérale Nationale, many prospective Bloc members in the district of Quebec were hesitating about joining the new party.¹⁴⁵ He and another former A.L.N. member, L.-P. Morin, were among those still uncommitted. Following their first serious meeting with Raymond in Montreal, Philippon reported to Gouin that they both had decided to abstain from involvement in the Bloc until the situation became stabilized. One of the major reasons for this decision was their ignorance, even after their encounter with Raymond, of the activities and intentions of the new party:

Il reste tout de même que nous repartons de la [the meeting with Raymond] sans connaître quoi que ce soit du mouvement, ni rien des projets du chef. Comme dit Monsieur Morin, nous sommes dans 'le vague le plus absolu.'¹⁴⁶

Acknowledging that their relationship with Raymond was not close

and that, therefore, perhaps confidences were not in order, Philippon went on to comment on Raymond's personality.

"Monsieur Raymond ... impressionne très favorablement. Franc, probe, gentilhomme, qui accueille bien ... mais il s'ouvre peu. Il est presque réticent."¹⁴⁷ Philippon's remarks accurately underline Raymond's reserved nature and indicate that because of it Raymond failed to communicate an attitude of trust and encouragement to those interested in joining the ranks of the Bloc Populaire. Philippon also questioned Raymond's practice of consulting with members and interested parties alone and individually, rather than at a meeting of caucus, which would bring all the members together. Philippon's comments give the strong impression that he felt that the control of the Bloc was too exclusively centered in Maxime Raymond.

The lack of activity on the part of the Bloc Populaire had also discouraged Philippon and Morin. The delay of the opening rally in the Beauce made them uneasy, as did the silence of Edouard Lacroix, who, at that time (16 October) had not yet declared his membership in the Bloc.¹⁴⁸ Nor had any of the other members of "les onze" publicly committed themselves to the new party. Generally, Philippon felt that the progress of the Bloc was not advancing as it should, that some difficulty was seriously hindering the activity of the party. "Qu'est-ce qui accroche," he inquired, "car il semble que quelqu'un ou quelque chose 'accroche' avant le départ."¹⁴⁹ He and Morin were not the only ones experiencing these doubts, he added, and warned that it could seriously harm the party if such an

attitude became generalized.

There is little evidence to contradict Philippon's impression that the organization of the Bloc was indeed moving very slowly.¹⁵⁰ One of the problems occupying the attention of the Bloc Populaire at this time was the continued refusal of Dr. Philippe Hamel to join the party. Hamel's previous activities for the nationalist cause, particularly his crusade against the electricity trust, had earned him a great deal of popularity and respect from the population of Quebec, and his hesitation to join the party would be difficult to explain to a questioning public.

Dr. Hamel had emerged from the September second meeting with Maxime Raymond filled with misgivings about his future role in the party. He was particularly concerned over what seemed to be Raymond's failure to accept Hamel's proposals for the nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry in Quebec. Hamel felt that it was imperative that the leader accept his judgment completely, at least in this key area of interest. Fearing that the young party might be interested solely in the influence of his reputation for electoral purposes, Hamel stipulated to Paul Gouin:

Je veux avoir la certitude, avant le départ, d'être d'accord avec mon chef et ses principaux lieutenants, non seulement sur les principes mais aussi pour les procédés, au moins pour ceux que l'on devra utiliser pour en finir avec la perfidie du trust de l'électricité.¹⁵¹

While he accepted Raymond's position that "il faut un chef, et non des chefs," Dr. Hamel maintained that if the party desired his collaboration, it must accept his methods.¹⁵²

Pressure was exerted on Philippe Hamel to join the nascent movement not only by his friends, Paul Gouin, and René Chaloult, but also by such an influential person as Abbé Lionel Groulx. On some date in October, apparently near the middle of the month, Hamel received a phone call from the Chanoine asking him to come to Montreal that evening for a meeting. The purpose of this encounter, which included Maxime Raymond, was to persuade Dr. Hamel to join the Bloc Populaire without condition. According to Hamel,

Durant trois heures, ce personnage [Chanoine Groulx] plaïda la cause de M. Raymond en la présence même de ce dernier. Il voulait ma soumission sans condition à M. Raymond parce que, disait-il, c'était un honnête homme.¹⁵³

For the moment, even the urgings of Groulx were insufficient to persuade Hamel to join Raymond without the assurance that his leader trusted him and offered complete co-operation. As Hamel later justified his position, "tout autre esprit [on the part of Raymond] devenait de la dictature ou de la méfiance que je ne pouvais accepter."¹⁵⁴

However, it was not long before Dr. Hamel yielded to the urgings of his associates. At the request of Paul Gouin, Hamel agreed to come to Montreal on 29 October for another meeting with Raymond. According to Hamel, it was on the understanding that Maxime Raymond had agreed to accept Hamel's conditions, at least on the issue of ownership of electricity.¹⁵⁵ However, on Dr. Hamel's arrival with Paul Gouin at Raymond's residence, a long discussion of electricity again ensued. This discussion, according to Hamel and Gouin, finally resulted in an agreement

definite enough to persuade Hamel to give his support to Raymond. The key feature of the agreement was that, in event of a provincial electoral victory by the Bloc Populaire, the government would immediately introduce a bill authorizing the expropriation of the public utilities and of the hydro generating stations in Quebec, doing so without any prior payment of indemnities to the former owners.¹⁵⁶ Indemnity would be paid later after an inventory and a study of the concrete value of the enterprises had been made, but such indemnity would be paid only to bondholders of the companies and not to shareholders. In such case as the government should decide to provide some indemnity to those holding shares based on other than the real value of the enterprise, payment would be made out of the general funds of the province rather than by the provincial hydro.¹⁵⁷

The acceptance of this proposal as the policy of the Bloc Populaire in regard to the nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry seemed to satisfy Dr. Hamel. He would have preferred to have a guarantee of the agreement in writing, but Maxime Raymond apparently considered such a procedure unnecessary. As Hamel later described the final compromise:

J'acceptais, enfin de joindre le Bloc, bien que M. Raymond ne m'eût donné aucun écrit et que sa déclaration privée ne liât que lui envers moi. En somme, je ne tenais aucune garantie réelle. ... De tels engagements, il est toujours préférable de les consigner dans un écrit, mais je ne pouvais, paraît-il, demander cette protection à M. Raymond sans l'insulter.¹⁵⁸

Hamel's membership in the Bloc Populaire was announced in Le Devoir on 31 October: "pour mettre fin à certaines rumeurs, le

Bloc Populaire Canadien fait connaître au public l'adhésion de Dr. Philippe Hamel ..."¹⁵⁹ The careful wording of the statement gave no indication that Hamel's membership in the party dated only two days.

On 1 November Maxime Raymond outlined the policies of the Bloc Populaire in the areas of labour legislation and agriculture during his second broadcast as leader of the party.¹⁶⁰ Raymond pointed out that since the Bloc was active both federally and provincially its platform would cover a wide range of varied topics, but "notre intervention devant se manifester tout d'abord à Québec, c'est au programme à réaliser à la Législature que nous apporterons nos premières occupations."¹⁶¹ The Bloc leader emphasized his party's foremost concern for "le capital humain", a theme which later became familiar in the propaganda of the Bloc Populaire. In the field of agriculture this concern would be translated into efforts to increase the income and to improve the living conditions of the farmer and his family. Raymond explained that the Bloc intended to carry out this program of improvement through measures such as the encouragement of the co-operative movement, the provision of easy credit for farm expansion, the modernization and diversification of the industry, and the introduction of an energetic programme of rural electrification.¹⁶² Discussing the urgent need for rural electrification, Raymond admitted the need for "revolutionary changes" in the administration of the hydro-electrical resources in the province before such a vast programme could be introduced. However, since these changes were essential for the public good,

the Bloc was determined to institute them and, Raymond added, "nous n'hésiterons pas à avoir recours à l'étatisation par les moyens les plus expéditifs."¹⁶³ During the remainder of his speech, Raymond discussed the problems of the urban working classes, promising that a Bloc Populaire government would provide better housing, higher wages, and a new code of labour legislation to provide greater protection for the worker. The Bloc was determined that the worker should have equal opportunity with the more fortunate classes to comfortably raise his family:

Il n'y a pas raison pour que les richesses brutes de la province, mises en valeur par l'ouvrier autant que par le capitaliste, ne profite pas, toute proportion gardée, à l'ouvrier qu'au capitaliste. Je n'hésite pas à ajouter que le salaire doit primer la dividende.¹⁶⁴

By combining its appeal to both the farmers and the workers, the Bloc was over-looking any conflict of interest between the two economic groups, emphasizing instead the party's determination to bring about greater economic equality in general. Both groups continued to receive special attention in the campaigns of the Bloc Populaire. With this second speech by Raymond, the platform of the Bloc Populaire was slowly taking shape.

An equally significant event for the Bloc was its inaugural rally held on 8 November at Saint-Georges de Beauce. Surprisingly neither Paul Gouin nor Philippe Hamel were present for the occasion. Although Le Devoir and L'Action Catholique had announced that Gouin and René Chaloult would also attend the rally,¹⁶⁵ the only representatives of the party present were the two speakers for the afternoon, Maxime Raymond and Edouard Lacroix.

The explanation of the absence of Gouin and Chaloult was rumoured to be Lacroix's objections to appearing on the same platform with them, an explanation not unreasonable in view of the hostility still existing between them as result of their conflict over the 1937 by-election in the Beauce.¹⁶⁶

Le Devoir reported capacity attendance in the Parish Hall at Saint-Georges in spite of the first heavy snowfall of the winter.¹⁶⁷ Addressing the crowd first, Raymond again explained his motives for founding a new party¹⁶⁸ and added that, in leaving the Liberal party, he and Edouard Lacroix had chosen "entre servir le parti ou rester fidèle à notre mandat."¹⁶⁹ Raymond then discussed some of the issues which the party considered of prime importance both federally and provincially. In the area of federal jurisdiction he emphasized the Bloc's demand for the recognition of Canadian sovereignty, its determination to defend provincial autonomy, and its campaign for the recognition of equal rights for both French and English Canadians. Provincially, he stressed the party's concern for "le capital humain" and, in particular, for the family. Edouard Lacroix followed Raymond, speaking to his constituents in an informal and relaxed manner. His speech was primarily an attack on the war policies of the Liberal administration at Ottawa, and, in particular, on the outrageous budgets necessary to finance war expenditure. In contrast to the irresponsibility of the King government Lacroix upheld the example of "le groupe des onze" who, in spite of their isolation in the House of Commons, had continued to defend the true interests of Canadians. Lacroix closed his address by

announcing his intention to participate as a Bloc Populaire member not only federally, but provincially as well, a statement which probably confirmed Hamel's worst fears.¹⁷⁰

The Bloc Populaire Canadien was formed as a response to mounting French Canadian opposition to Canadian involvement in World War II and to their growing fear that this involvement would result in the introduction of conscription. The nationalist revival which accompanied the campaign of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada preceding the plebiscite of 27 April 1942 resulted in the formation of the Bloc Populaire in September of that year. While the formation of the Bloc was stimulated by protest over Canadian involvement in the war, the Bloc was also a continuation of the nationalist tradition of social and economic reform established by the Programme de Restauration Sociale in 1933 and defended by the Action Libérale Nationale formed in 1934. However, unlike the Action Libérale Nationale which was purely a provincial party, the Bloc Populaire intended to combine both federal and provincial political involvement.

Two distinct elements were significant in the formation of the Bloc Populaire: the dissident federal Liberals such as Raymond, Edouard Lacroix, and Dr. Pierre Gauthier; and the group of Quebec nationalists associated with Paul Gouin and Dr. Philippe Hamel, most of whom had been active in the Action Libérale Nationale. It was hoped that both groups would work together under the leadership of Maxime Raymond, presented as the new "chef" of French Canada. The leadership of Raymond, a man of independent means and free of any previous association with the nationalist

rivalries within Quebec, was accepted by both elements. However, indications of friction appeared even during the formative period of the Bloc Populaire. While Raymond, in accepting the leadership of the Bloc, indicated no obligation to any one group, his acceptance of financial assistance from Edouard Lacroix, the appointment of Pierre Gauthier as organizer for the Quebec district, and the choice of Saint-Georges de Beauce as the site of the opening rally of the Bloc Populaire all indicated a close association with the federal members of the group. At the same time, Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult emerged from their negotiations with Raymond prior to the announcement of the new party with the opinion that they were Raymond's "principaux collaborateurs." However, they possessed no official guarantee of their position. Dr. Philippe Hamel in particular remained suspicious of the motives of the Bloc in soliciting their support, fearful that, as in 1936, the social and economic reforms he defended would not be implemented if the Bloc gained power provincially. Continuing hostility between Lacroix and the provincial nationalists as a result of their disagreement in 1937 over the by-election in the Beauce further complicated the issue and indicated the strong possibility of continuing tension and conflict.

The formation of the Bloc Populaire had resulted from slow and careful negotiations. The establishment of its basic organization prior to its inauguration at Saint-Georges de Beauce had proceeded equally slowly. While the wide-spread support in Quebec of the Ligue campaign and the presence within the Bloc of

several prominent Quebec nationalists promised a hopeful future for the new movement, at the same time strong doubts persisted as to the party's ability to remain united and to build sufficient strength to invade both the federal and provincial political fields.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER I

¹Mason Wade, The French Canadians 1760-1967, p. 923.

²Ibid., p. 934.

³Ibid., p. 925.

⁴Ibid., p. 930.

⁵Ibid.

⁶J.M. Beck, Pendulum of Power (Scarborough: Prentice-Hall of Canada, 1968), p. 238.

⁷Wade, op. cit., p. 928.

⁸Ibid., p. 933.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹Blair Fraser, "This is Raymond," Maclean's Magazine, January 1, 1944, p. 30.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Wade, op. cit., p. 933.

¹⁴Ibid., p. 947.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid., pp. 946-948.

¹⁷Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec (Montreal: Fides, 1942--), XXXIX, 181.

¹⁸The eleven members of Parliament referred to as "le groupe des onze" included: Maurice Bourget (Levis), Emmanuel d'Anjou (Rimouski), Pierre Gauthier (Portneuf), Liguori Lacome (Laval-Deux Montagnes), Edouard Lacroix (Beauce), Wilfrid Lacroix (Québec-Montmorency), L.-P. Lizotte (Kamouraska), Charles Parent (Quebec West and South), J.-F. Pouliot (Temiscouata), Maxime Raymond (Beauharnois-Laprairie), Sasseville Roy (Gaspé). Canada, House of Commons Debates, 1942, Vol. 1, p. 722.

¹⁹Rumilly, op. cit., XXXIX, 188.

²⁰Ibid., p. 187.

²¹Ibid., p. 192. An indication of the influence of the Ligue is given by the names of the other directors of the Ligue and a list of the organizations to which they belonged: J.-Alfred Bernier, founder of the Association catholique des Voyageurs de commerce and a former president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste in Montreal; L.-Athanase Fréchette, president of the Société Saint-Jean-Baptiste; Philippe Girard, president of the Conseil Central des Syndicats catholiques; and Gérard Filion, secretary general of the Union catholique des Cultivateurs. While these men joined the Ligue as individuals, it is safe to assume that their membership indicated support for the Ligue among the associations which they headed.

²²Ibid., p. 197.

²³Ibid., p. 217.

²⁴Ibid., p. 219.

²⁵Ibid., p. 305.

²⁶Le Devoir, April 27, 1942, p. 1.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Wade, op. cit., p. 950.

²⁹Le Devoir, April 28, 1942, p. 1.

³⁰PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 9, Horace Philippon to Paul Gouin, June 10, 1942.

³¹Ibid.

³²Le Devoir, May 16, 1942, p. 8.

³³PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 9, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, May 27, 1942.

³⁴PAC, Ibid., Vol 9, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, June 17, 1942.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Correspondance: M.-L. Beaulieu, Marie-Louis Beaulieu to Paul Gouin, March 24, 1944, "Historique de la fondation du Bloc." (Hereafter cited as "Historique de la fondation du Bloc") Beaulieu's letter indicates that Gouin saw Pelletier's opposition as one of the main obstacles to political involvement for the Ligue.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Le Devoir, June 17, 1942, p. 3

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Rumilly, op. cit., XXXIX, 260.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²By this time Paul Gouin and Dr. Philippe Hamel were back on cordial terms. The writer found no indication of when they resumed their former relationship, but they were corresponding in 1940, discussing the possibility of attempting another movement at that time. PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, October 22, 1940.

⁴³Fraser, op. cit., p. 9.

⁴⁴According to Abbé Groulx, an "entente" existed between Raymond and Pelletier, by which Le Devoir would support the Bloc as long as Raymond remained as leader. I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Victor Trépanier, Abbé Groulx to Victor Trépanier, July 27, 1943.

⁴⁵Rumilly, op. cit., XXXIX, 145.

⁴⁶Ibid., p. 268.

⁴⁷Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 18.

⁴⁸It is very difficult to determine exactly when Lacroix and Raymond reached their agreement. No definite reference to the agreement was found in Raymond's correspondence, and Lacroix merely referred to it as his "obligation d'aide convenu en 1942-43." I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Correspondance: Imbroglia, Edouard Lacroix to Maxime Raymond, May 6, 1944.

⁴⁹Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 39. Beaulieu had also been active for some time in the co-operative movement in Quebec.

⁵⁰I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, "Historique de la fondation du Bloc."

⁵¹Ibid. As had the Action Libérale Nationale before them, the Bloc divided the province into two districts: the Montreal district comprised of those constituencies in the western half of the province; and the Quebec district, including those constituencies in the eastern half of the province.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Ibid.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid.

⁵⁷Ibid.

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Le Devoir, July 6, 1942, p. 3.

⁶¹L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4, "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, "Historique de la fondation du Bloc."

⁶⁴Le Devoir, August 3, 1942, p. 10.

⁶⁵Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 39.

⁶⁶Le Devoir, August 13, 1942, p. 6.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Ibid.

⁷⁰Ibid., p. 1.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, "Historique de la fondation du Bloc."

⁷⁴I.H., Ibid., Correspondance: Beaulieu -- Me Marie-Louis, Marie-Louis Beaulieu to Maxime Raymond, August 18, 1942.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, René Chaloult, René Chaloult to Abbé Groulx, August 28, 1942.

⁷⁷Ibid.

⁷⁸While in 1940 both Paul Gouin and Philippe Hamel discussed and rejected the idea of a new nationalist movement at that time, Hamel emphasized the importance of being "prêts à toute éventualité." PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, October 22, 1940.

⁷⁹When the Ligue failed to respond to Gouin's suggestion for a congress of the French Canadian elite, Gouin rejected the idea of sponsoring such a congress himself because of lack of finances and organization. PAC, Ibid., Vol. 9, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, June 17, 1942.

⁸⁰Above, p. 7.

⁸¹Lacroix had briefly financed the Quebec district of the Action Libérale Nationale in the summer of 1934 when the Action Libérale Nationale was first formed. However, the practice was discontinued because the Montreal section of the Action Libérale Nationale did not think it was in the best interests of the party. Reid, op.cit., p. 114.

⁸²I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, André Laurendeau to Gérard Filion, September 1, 1942.

⁸³I.H., ibid., "Historique de la fondation du Bloc."

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4, "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

⁸⁶Ibid. According to Beaulieu, Martineau knew Raymond well and Beaulieu hoped that Martineau's presence would facilitate the negotiations.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Correspondance: M.-L. Beaulieu, "Programme Sommaire pour le nouveau parti politique que dirigera M. Maxime Raymond."

⁹⁰Ibid. Hamel proposed that the province be divided into two or three sections. The lieutenant in charge of each section would be responsible for forming an executive and appropriate committees for his section.

⁹¹Ibid. As members of this committee Dr. Hamel suggested himself, René Chaloult, Marie-Louis Beaulieu, Ernest Grégoire, and Horace Philippon. Grégoire and Philippon had been members of the Action Libérale Nationale and, while Philippon had supported Gouin when he broke with Duplessis in 1935, Grégoire

supported Hamel and remained in the Union Nationale until 1936. He and Hamel broke with Duplessis at the same time and both were involved in the Parti National when it formed in 1937. Grégoire had since become involved in the Quebec Social Credit party, but Hamel obviously hoped to bring him into the new party.

⁹²I.H., ibid., "Historique de la fondation du Bloc."

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4, "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, "Historique de la fondation du Bloc."

⁹⁷PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 9, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, September 3, 1942.

⁹⁸L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4, "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

⁹⁹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, "Historique de la fondation du Bloc."

¹⁰⁰L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4, "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

¹⁰¹PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 9, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, September 4, 1944.

¹⁰²Le Devoir, September 8, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰³Le Devoir, September 9, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵On breaking from the Liberal party, Lacombe founded the Parti Canadien. However, he received practically no support for this new group and remained its only member in the House.

¹⁰⁶Le Devoir, September 9, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Le Devoir, September 10, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰⁹Le Devoir, September 11, 1942, p. 3.

¹¹⁰Le Devoir, September 14, 1942, p. 2.

¹¹¹Ibid.

¹¹²I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Correspondance: Gauthier, Pierre Gauthier to Maxime Raymond, September 20, 1942.

113 Ibid.

114 Le Devoir, September 26, 1942, p. 3

115 I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Correspondance: Gauthier (Dr. Pierre), m.d.m.p., Pierre Gauthier to Maxime Raymond, October 5, 1942.

116 Lacroix's reference to their agreement of "1942-43" would indicate that it was concluded before the end of 1942. I.H., Ibid., Correspondance: Imbroglio, Edouard Lacroix to Maxime Raymond, May 6, 1944.

117 The opening of a Bloc office in Quebec City, the naming of Pierre Gauthier as Bloc organizer for the Quebec district, the choice of St.-Georges de Beauce as the location for the first Bloc rally, and the appearance of Lacroix with Raymond at that rally, would indicate that by that time, Lacroix was providing the financing of the Quebec district. These events will be discussed later in this chapter.

118 During the break between Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult, and the Bloc Populaire, the nature of the agreement between Lacroix and Raymond caused considerable controversy. That the agreement existed whereby Lacroix provided the financing of the Quebec district is unquestionable. However, the trio claimed that Raymond intentionally kept it secret from them, and there are indications that their claim was well founded. At the same time, Raymond denied that he had given Lacroix any special authority in the Quebec district. In view of what seems to be Raymond's extreme honesty and his equally strong reluctance to share his authority or to commit himself to any one else, the writer is inclined to accept Raymond's assertion. However, what Raymond refused to admit was that merely by accepting the money of Lacroix he was increasing the influence of Lacroix within the party, and by allowing Lacroix to finance the Quebec district directly without passing through any central treasury, he gave Lacroix almost unlimited influence within that district. This question will be discussed in more detail below, chaps. 2 and 3.

119 I.H., ibid., Pierre Gauthier to J.-F. Pouliot, August 25, 1942.

120 It is assumed here that Dr. Pierre Gauthier and Edouard Lacroix were already committed to Raymond, so that the meeting had been arranged primarily to win the support of the other members of the "onze."

121 Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6. There is no concrete indication of who suggested the name, Bloc Populaire Canadien. Again the writer feels that the choice was most likely that of Raymond. Dr. Gauthier counselled Raymond against that particular

name as he felt it might produce associations with the Front Populaire of Léon Blum in France. Gauthier suggested several other possibilities which were apparently rejected: Unité Canadienne, Unité Canadienne Coopérative, or Coopération démocratique Canadienne. I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Correspondance: Gauthier (Dr. Pierre) m.d.m.p., Pierre Gauthier to Maxime Raymond, September 20, 1942.

¹²²Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Ibid.

¹²⁶Ibid.

¹²⁷Ibid. This motto is identical to the phrase used by Georges Pelletier in his editorial in Le Devoir on August 13, 1942. This editorial most likely served as the inspiration for the choice of motto for the Bloc.

¹²⁸Le Devoir, October 13, 1942, p. 3.

¹²⁹Ibid.

¹³⁰In his article on Raymond in Maclean's Magazine, Blair Fraser expressed the opinion that Raymond had hoped to bring with him into the Bloc Populaire all the other eleven dissident Quebec members except for Jean-François Pouliot, with whom he had never been on the best of terms. Fraser, op. cit., p. 9.

¹³¹Le Devoir, October 27, 1942, p. 3.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Actually, Gauthier did have experience in both areas. He was first elected to the Quebec Legislature in a by-election on October 31, 1927. He was re-elected in the general election of 1931, but was defeated by an Action Libérale Nationale candidate in 1935. He had first been elected to the House of Commons in a by-election in January 1936, and re-elected in the general election of 1940. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1940, p. 164.

¹³⁴Le Devoir, October 19, 1942, p. 4.

¹³⁵Ibid.

¹³⁶In particular Gouin mentioned Raymond's campaign beginning in 1928 for caisses de crédit agricole; his denunciation in 1934

of a government loan to the C.P.R.; his opposition at various times to measures which would have favoured large enterprises such as the C.P.R., Dominion Textile, and Montreal Light, Heat, and Power; his campaign for a more equal representation of French Canadians in the federal civil service; and his support of an immigration policy more suited to Canada's needs.

137 Ibid.

138 Le Devoir, October 23, 1942, p. 6.

139 Ibid.

140 Ibid.

141 In addition to Maxime Raymond and Paul Gouin, Le Devoir noted the presence of Anatole Vanier, president of the Ligue d'Action Nationale; Arthur Laurendeau, a long time member and active nationalist; and Father Papin Archambault, the founder in Montreal of the Ligue des droits du Français in 1913 which later became the Action Nationale. Ibid.

142 L'Action Nationale, November, 1942, p. 170.

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 9, H. Philippon to Paul Gouin, October 15, 1942.

146 Ibid.

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 While the documentation consulted for this period is somewhat limited in regard to the initial planning of the party, the impression retained by the writer is that, while perhaps a great deal of time was spent on discussion and deliberation, very little by way of concrete organization was accomplished during this period.

151 PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, October 5, 1942.

152 PAC, ibid., Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, October 26, 1942.

¹⁵³L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4, "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 8, Paul Gouin to Philippe Hamel, November 17, 1942.

¹⁵⁷Dr. Hamel was very concerned that any government-owned provincial Hydro not be burdened at the outset with the overwhelming financial responsibility of compensating share-holders for what he considered to be the unduly inflated and speculative value of their stocks.

¹⁵⁸L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4, "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

¹⁵⁹Le Devoir, October 31, 1942, p. 3. According to a later account by Dr. Hamel, Raymond had wanted to announce during his November first radio broadcast that Dr. Hamel had joined the Bloc Populaire, but Edouard Lacroix objected to any mention of Hamel's name during the broadcast.

¹⁶⁰Le Devoir, November 2, 1942, p. 9.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³Ibid. Raymond's comments on the nationalization of electricity, which were reported in Le Devoir under the caption, "Electrification des campagnes, même s'il faut recourir à l'étatisation," once again aroused Hamel's fears. Raymond had committed himself, Hamel maintained, to a positive acceptance of immediate nationalization, regardless of the circumstances. PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, November 10, 1942. Gouin's reassurance that Hamel had correctly interpreted the agreement of 29 October allayed Hamel's doubts for the time being. Ibid., Paul Gouin to Philippe Hamel, November 17, 1942.

¹⁶⁴Le Devoir, November 2, 1942, p. 9.

¹⁶⁵Rumilly, op.cit., XL, 87.

¹⁶⁶According to Philippe Hamel, Saint-Georges de Beauce had been chosen as the site of the début of the Bloc Populaire "selon les exigences du chef No. 2 Edouard Lacroix ... sans que Gouin, ni Chaloult, ni moi-même va sans dire, puissions y figurer." L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 4; "Philippe Hamel Parle ..."

¹⁶⁷Le Devoir, November 9, 1942, p. 7.

168 The reasons outlined were primarily the same as those which he had set out during his broadcast of 11 October.

169 Ibid.

170 Ibid.

CHAPTER II

VICTORY IN STANSTEAD

By the time of the inaugural rally of the Bloc Populaire at Saint-Georges de Beauce, the party had established a basic organization. However, the foundations of the Bloc were still weak and the next months would be a crucial test of the determination of the Bloc Populaire to remain united as a political party. Deprived for several months of the leadership of Maxime Raymond who suffered a serious heart attack in February 1943, the Bloc experienced serious internal conflicts during this period which greatly decreased its effectiveness and critically threatened its future. However, the Bloc made a crucial decision in June 1943 when, in spite of its internal weakness, it decided to nominate Bloc candidates in the federal by-elections to be held in the constituencies of Montreal-Cartier and Stanstead on 9 August. The eventual victory in Stanstead gave the Bloc Populaire encouragement at a time when encouragement was sorely needed and renewed the party's resolve to continue.

The rally at Saint-Georges de Beauce did not mark any acceleration of activity for the Bloc Populaire. Of the rally itself historian Robert Rumilly writes that, "l'assemblée de Saint-Georges n'obtient qu'un retentissement relatif."¹ The

still disorganized state of the party was reflected in its abstention from the federal by-elections held on November in the constituencies of Charlevoix-Saguenay and Outremont.² In announcing its decision not to run candidates, the Bloc explained that the party was only beginning the process of organization and "des tâches importantes occupent actuellement nos activités."³ The Bloc justified its decision by arguing that in neither constituency would its participation alter the policies of the government. In the constituency of Charlevoix-Saguenay, it explained, there was no official Liberal candidate and all candidates had declared themselves opposed to conscription for over-seas duty.⁴ Outremont, a constituency with a French name but dominated by English and Jewish voters, had voted sixty percent in favour of conscription in the April plebiscite and the Bloc anticipated no significant changes since then. The ministerial candidate in Outremont was General La Flèche, recently appointed war services minister, and the Bloc maintained that, under the existing circumstances, no one could claim that La Flèche even represented the views of all the constituency, let alone those of the province.⁵

While the Bloc Populaire did not feel prepared to contest the by-elections, the nationalist position in Outremont was represented by the candidacy of Jean Drapeau, the twenty-six year old director of la Ligue pour la Défense du Canada.⁶ Styling himself "le candidat des conscrits," Drapeau promptly enlisted the collaboration of the youngers members of the Ligue such as Marc Carrière, Michel Chartrand, André Laurendeau, and Marcel

Poulin. At the same time he enjoyed the support of older members of the nationalist élite such as Dr. J.-B. Prince, president of la Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, and Henri Bourassa, who spoke in favour of Drapeau at a rally the day before the election.⁷

Drapeau and his lieutenants, referred to by Rumilly as "un groupe très brillant,"⁸ led a forceful and highly emotional campaign, the tension of which was increased when Marc Carrière, Drapeau's campaign manager, was arrested at campaign headquarters the evening of 20 November and imprisoned under the provisions of the War Measures Act.⁹ Carrière was replaced by Michel Chartrand and the campaign continued, climaxed by the rally on 29 November at which Henri Bourassa was the main speaker. While General LaFlèche won the election by over a five thousand vote majority, the nationalists' campaign revived some of the spirit which the April plebiscite had animated. During the early part of December nationalist activity in Quebec increased. The Jeunes Laurentiens sponsored a lecture at which the guests of honour were Maxime Raymond, Paul Gouin, André Laurendeau, and Jean Drapeau, and the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada held a series of public meetings to mark the anniversary of the Statute of Westminster.¹⁰

The main concern of the Bloc continued to be the resolution of its internal problems. In Montreal the campaign in Outremont monopolized public attention and also the efforts of many of those involved in the Bloc Populaire. Any activity in Quebec City was made difficult by the absence of Dr. Pierre Gauthier who was brought to trial on 25 November on charges of irregularities in his examination of recruits while serving as a captain in the

medical corps.¹¹ While Dr. Gauthier was acquitted on 15 December, he spent the interim period in prison, which considerably restricted his political activities with the Bloc, but provided excellent campaign material for the party.

Definite attempts were made during this period to smooth the hostility between Edouard Lacroix and Dr. Philippe Hamel or, failing that, to arrive at a compromise which would allow both to collaborate with the party. It appears that the first direct confrontation between the two took place on 20 November at Lacroix's room in the Chateau Frontenac in Quebec City.¹² The results of the four-hour meeting, however, were meagre. Following their interview both Dr. Hamel and Edouard Lacroix remained hostile towards each other. Referring to his conflict with Hamel in 1937,¹³ Lacroix wrote Raymond that the Quebec nationalist had in no way changed since then: "il fait une maladie grave de son électricité."¹⁴ According to Lacroix, Hamel wanted to be the "star" of the party and "surtout dominer pour conduire à sa guise le mouvement."¹⁵ Lacroix claimed that Hamel only desired to use the Bloc to regain his own popularity and that of friends such as Ernest Grégoire and Paul Gouin, but in Lacroix's opinion,

Dans le district de Québec Grégoire est une drug Hamel peut aider dans un ou 2 comtés s'il ne s'exite pas trop car sa maniere de faire du show Arrivé en triomphe, assemble en 3 ou les orateurs se transporte avec suite durant les entracte aide de grand tapageur est une politique qui fait peut etre a des extrémistes mais pas a moi [sic]¹⁶

Lacroix was convinced that Hamel "ne s'accordera jamais avec personne tant qu'il ne sera pas premier," but he, personally,

had had enough of Hamel and his "gang" in 1935.¹⁷

Hamel, for his part, resented Lacroix's attitude that Hamel's campaign against the trusts was an embarrassment to the party. He felt that Lacroix had made it amply clear to him that, if Hamel continued to attack the trusts, his presence in the party would not be welcome.¹⁸ Had it not been for his regard for Maxime Raymond, Hamel later wrote to the Bloc leader, he would have at the time completely severed relations with Lacroix and, if necessary, with the party.¹⁹

At the end of November Hamel complained to Paul Gouin in Montreal that Lacroix was obstructing the activity of the Bloc in the district of Quebec City.²⁰ A scheduled radio broadcast by Lacroix had been postponed several times and Hamel reported that all public meetings in the Quebec district, although approved by the party leader, had been cancelled until further notice. He noted that there was a good group at Quebec City willing to work for Raymond, but unfortunately,

... nous ne pouvons le lancer à la besogne, faute d'organisateur, de bureau, et de caisse, Il se perd un temps précieux.²¹

He urged the launching of a popular subscription for campaign funds to provide the party with the financial resources needed to support its activities.

Acknowledging that the party as a whole was not advancing "à pas de géant," Paul Gouin added that he could foresee no solution to bring an end to the paralysis of the district of Quebec which would not entail a confrontation with Edouard Lacroix:

Je ne vois aucune formule qui permettrait de concilier les exigences de M. Lacroix avec les intérêts de la cause et, d'un autre côté, il est évident que nous ne pouvons pas continuer de la sorte sans risquer d'aller à un échec. Il va falloir ou bien que M. Lacroix rentre dans le rang comme nous tous ou bien que nous nous dispensions de sa collaboration.²²

Hamel encouraged Gouin to adopt a firm position in party caucus on the question of Lacroix's role in the Bloc.²³

The disagreement between Lacroix and Hamel reached a crisis during the first week in December, prompted by a rather unpleasant letter from Lacroix to Hamel which concluded with the statement that, "Moi et vous pour s'entendre il faudrait que vous arrêtiez de parler de vos bêtises du passé."²⁴ Exasperated, Hamel wrote Raymond that he could endure Lacroix no longer:

De nous deux, monsieur Lacroix et moi, il y en a un de trop dans le mouvement. ... Comme l'argent semble être le besoin le plus pressant du Bloc, je comprends que dans l'intérêt du mouvement, je doive m'effacer.²⁵

While he at first believed that he and Raymond could work together for the triumph of their cause, "Il me reste encore trop de fierté pour être le serviteur d'un gros ignare cossu."²⁶ Lacroix's lack of co-operation, his revoking of decisions coming from Montreal, and his attacks on Hamel and René Chaloult²⁷ had become intolerable, Hamel informed Raymond. To Gouin, Hamel wrote that he had decided to cease all activity with the Bloc as long as Lacroix was also a member.²⁸

However, Hamel's departure from the Bloc was stayed by the suggestion, apparently originating with Gouin and Chaloult, that the district of Quebec be divided into two sections or zones of influence, one which would be assigned to Lacroix, the other

to Hamel, Chaloult, and their supporters.²⁹ A condition imposed by Dr. Hamel and René Chaloult was an organizer of their own choice who would not be paid by funds coming from Edouard Lacroix. Paul Gouin reported that Maxime Raymond seemed initially receptive to the proposal and eager to reach a solution to the impasse.³⁰ While Raymond's activity was limited at this particular time due to a slight illness, he approved a suggestion from Paul Gouin that a party caucus be held on 10 January 1943. Raymond indicated to Gouin that the proposal and the conditions requested by Hamel and Chaloult were acceptable to him and suggested that, until the caucus was held, that all activity in the Quebec district be suspended.³¹

According to an official report of the January tenth caucus, the proposal for the division of the Quebec district was not discussed.³² The major portion of the meeting was spent on administrative matters, the setting up of a "Conseil suprême," regional committees, and sub-committees.³³ However, the appointment of an organizer to assist Dr. Gauthier was proposed and M. Armand Viau³⁴ was suggested for the position. This was the person whom Dr. Hamel hoped to acquire as assistant organizer and, apparently, no objections were raised to Viau's appointment. However, any final decision was postponed until Maxime Raymond had settled the question of the salary of the organizer.³⁵ The caucus also discussed other needs of the party, including the possibility of buying an existing weekly newspaper, such as La Boussole, and determining which newspapers were sympathetic to the Bloc. It was recommended that organization be started

in the constituency of Stanstead as soon as possible, in the eventuality of a federal by-election there in the near future.³⁶

In spite of Raymond's apparent willingness when first consulted, the idea of the division of the Quebec district into two zones of influence seems to have been dropped. Nor was an assistant organizer for the Quebec district immediately appointed. The major obstacle to the appointment of an assistant organizer in Quebec City seems to have been a financial one, that of providing the salary. Apparently both Raymond and Lacroix were reluctant to provide the money for the expenditure.³⁷ It soon became apparent that neither of the proposals would be realized according to Hamel's desires. However, although the situation had altered little and the Quebec district remained inactive, Hamel was willing to accept, for the time being, the authority of Lacroix.³⁸ As matters stood, he declared, Lacroix would be "le maître incontestable" in the district of Quebec, and had only to cut off the party's funds should the Bloc activities displease him. Hamel acknowledged to Raymond the difficulty of the leader's position:

Vous comprenez fort bien la situation, mais ayant fait vos calculs sur cette source de revenu, vous ne voyez pas, pour l'instant, de solution autre que notre soumission à E.L. Nous acceptons temporairement cette situation, parce que nous entretenons l'espoir de pouvoir la modifier.³⁹

Little had resulted from the discussions of the previous two months which could be considered as solving the internal problems of the Bloc Populaire. Although both Edouard Lacroix and Philippe Hamel remained with the party, their positions also remained irreconcilable.

While the internal conflicts of the Bloc persisted, the caucus of 10 January indicated a considerable effort on the part of the party to strengthen its organization through the establishment of committees. Two other significant changes occurred in the organization of the Bloc at this time. On 30 December André Laurendeau, secretary general of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, announced his membership in the Bloc Populaire.⁴⁰ On joining the Bloc Laurendeau assumed the functions of the secretary of the party. On 14 January 1943 Philippe Girard, former president of the Syndicats catholiques of Montreal joined the organization as Bloc organizer in Montreal.⁴¹

At the end of January the Bloc Populaire also resumed its public activity, beginning with a massive rally on 27 January at the Marché Saint-Jacques in Montreal.⁴² In terms of the publicity given the rally and of the participation in it of key figures in the Bloc, the Montreal rally took on much more of an appearance of an inaugural rally than had the one at Saint-Georges de Beauce the preceding fall. All the major figures of the Bloc Populaire, with the exception of Edouard Lacroix, appeared with Raymond that evening. Although Lacroix's absence was explained at the last minute as unavoidable, when requested by Raymond to send a message of support for the rally, Lacroix replied,

Je suis 100% avec vous et de tout coeur, mais comment dire ça dans un message qui devra être lu dans une assemblée, lorsqu'il y aura sur votre plate-forme trois orateurs avec qui je ne calcule pas être de tout coeur--et loin de la pour le moment ... Envoyer un message, disant que je suis de tout coeur avec l'assemblée du marché Saint-Jacques et que je partage sincèrement l'opinion des chefs Hamel, Chaloult, et Gouin, je ne suis pas capable de faire ça encore.⁴³

The Bloc members who did attend, including André Laurendeau, Paul Gouin, René Chaloult, Philippe Hamel, and, of course, Maxime Raymond, were enthusiastically applauded by the crowd which packed and overflowed the auditorium, in which, according to Le Devoir, "la bonne humeur a régné constamment."⁴⁴ André Laurendeau read a congratulatory letter from Henri Bourassa, who expressed his admiration for Raymond's courage in launching the new movement, and his satisfaction with its programme:

... je tiens à vous féliciter particulièrement d'avoir placé au premier rang la restauration de la famille, l'encouragement de l'agriculture, l'organisation du travail, et surtout d'adopter comme objectif suprême et permanent les principes de l'ordre social chrétien.⁴⁵

Philippe Hamel expressed his admiration for Maxime Raymond and his unity of purpose with both Raymond and Paul Gouin. Gouin, in turn, predicted that a new milestone in history had been reached:

L'unanimité du 27 avril dernier, lors du prébiscite, se continue dans ce phalange, qui rallie toujours nos énergies autour d'un nouveau LaFontaine: Maxime Raymond. Demain la justice va passer et l'on verra ce pays enfin gouverné selon sa tradition, sa langue et sa culture.⁴⁶

Maxime Raymond, in terms similar to those which he had used on previous occasions, again emphasized the reasons for establishing a new party and outlined the main legislative and political concerns of the party. Denying that the Bloc Populaire in any way desired to push Quebec in the direction of separation, he declared that the Bloc was also concerned about national unity, but on certain conditions:

L'unité nationale, nous la voulons, tous; dans le respect des droits, oui; mais au prix de l'abandon de nos droits, non.⁴⁷

The unity of the Montreal rally, however, was ephemeral. Whether prompted by some new incident within the ranks or merely exasperated by the seeming "paralysis" of the party, both Paul Gouin and Philippe Hamel decided at the beginning of February to limit their activities in the party to the presentation of speeches.⁴⁸ This reduced the activities of the Bloc somewhat as Maxime Raymond, Edouard Lacroix, and Pierre Gauthier were occupied with sessions of the House of Commons at Ottawa. Maxime Raymond drew particular attention in his reply to the speech from the throne when he offered a stiff rebuke to Prime Minister King for having questioned the honour of the dissident members from Quebec, coldly pointing out that, "dans la province de Quebec ... l'homme d'honneur est celui qui respecte sa parole, ses engagements ..."⁴⁹ Other activities of the Bloc Populaire were primarily limited to radio broadcasts, the texts of which were also printed by Le Devoir.

But in spite of the relative inactivity of the group, the Bloc Populaire was assuming significance in the political situation in Quebec.⁵⁰ Its activities and intentions were of particular interest to the Union Nationale, since Duplessis' party already claimed to represent the nationalist position in the province. Rumours circulated frequently that an agreement would be reached between the Union Nationale and the Bloc Populaire, by which the Bloc would limit its activities to the federal field, leaving the provincial arena to Duplessis.⁵¹

It would seem that some definite proposition was advanced to the Bloc Populaire, or to Paul Gouin, by means of Horace Philippon in October of 1942. In referring to discussions between Philippon and Union Nationale member, Emile Boiteau, Gouin wrote:

La proposition Duplessis me laisse toujours perplexe. ... Elle est à la vérité inacceptable, mais je ne voudrais pas briser les ponts avec l'espoir que nous pourrions éventuellement détacher du Duplessis les bons éléments qui l'entourent tel que Bégin, Barrette, Boiteau et les autres dont vous me parliez.⁵²

Gouin had discussed the question with Maxime Raymond who agreed with Gouin's point of view: they wanted nothing to do with Duplessis, but would be delighted to attract some of his followers.⁵³ While none of the top ranking Duplessistes left their party for the Bloc Populaire, the Bloc did attract former Union Nationale members of some note such as Pierre Letarte⁵⁴ of Quebec City and Fernand Chaussé, a Social Science professor at the University of Montreal.⁵⁵

Many observers and supporters of the Bloc Populaire in fact expressed the opinion that the Bloc should restrict its activities to the federal field. Henri Bourassa advised Maxime Raymond that, in view of the Bloc's limited resources, it would be better to concentrate on the federal campaign.⁵⁶ Others interested in the Bloc argued similarly, pointing out that the Union Nationale already represented the voice of Quebec nationalism provincially.⁵⁷ However, indications appeared fairly early that the Bloc Populaire would show no special consideration to the Union Nationale. In his November first radio broadcast Maxime Raymond observed that the Union Nationale

had become "l'affaire d'un homme, non d'un peuple. Elle a été lamentablement au-dessous des espérances qu'on avaient mises en elle."⁵⁸ Both Pierre Letarte and Fernand Chaussé, on joining the Bloc, publicly described their disillusionment with the Union Nationale. While the federal members of the Bloc could be expected to be less concerned with the provincial activities of the party, it was highly unlikely that Gouin, Hamel, or Chaloult, after their previous experience with Duplessis, would sanction any agreement with him over the division of influence. Their foremost concern was the provincial field and they would not be inclined to abandon it to a man who had already betrayed them. Raymond continued to support the party's assertion that a strong federal representation could be effective only with the assured support and co-operation of the provincial government, and that the best way to ensure that co-operation was by electing Bloc representatives at both Ottawa and Quebec. In a radio speech under the Bloc auspices on 10 January, Bloc member Fernand de Haerne pointed out that, while Duplessis himself had little to do with federal politics, many of Duplessis' followers were closely associated with the activities of the Progressive Conservative party.⁵⁹ Pierre Vigeant, in an editorial in Le Devoir, supported the Bloc Populaire's decision to present candidates both federally and provincially, and even argued that federal politics should be subordinate to provincial politics, that while efforts in both areas should be co-ordinated, the premier of the province should be the political leader of French Canada.⁶⁰

The Union Nationale soon responded to the threat of the Bloc Populaire. On 17 December 1942 the Bloc was the target for some sharp attacks from Antonio Barrette and Paul Beaulieu of the Union Nationale on the occasion of the founding of the Jeunesse de l'Union Nationale.⁶¹ Hopefully through its junior counterpart, the Union Nationale could appeal to the younger segment of the population which might be more easily attracted to the youthfulness of the members of the Bloc Populaire as well as to the protest of its platform. Maurice Duplessis rejected the efforts of the members of the Bloc Populaire, calling them "patriotes à retardement" and claiming that it was the Union Nationale which had presented the first plebiscite on conscription in 1939.⁶² Maxime Raymond and his followers, "pour sauver les trusts d'où découlent leur fortunes, voudraient aujourd'hui sauver le parti libéral en créant un mouvement de flanc."⁶³ The secretary general of the Jeunesse de l'Union Nationale, Lionel Chevrier, continued the attack, labelling Raymond "un homme resté aveugle pendant dix-sept ans au sein du parti libéral."⁶⁴

The Bloc drew the attacks of the Union Nationale but failed to entice many of its active members. Neither did it enjoy much success among the other dissident Quebec members of Parliament, in spite of the many and varied rumours which circulated from time to time. Liguori Lacombe remained aloof, and Sasseville Roy and Frédéric Dorion showed a preference provincially for Duplessis' Union Nationale.⁶⁵ Liberal member Wilfrid Lacroix considered joining the Bloc,⁶⁶ as did

Frédéric Dorion's brother, Noël.⁶⁷ However, the Bloc was unable to entice either into its ranks. The Bloc's sporadic activity and fratricidal quarrels did not encourage the indecisive to abandon established political affiliations and positions.

The difficulties of the Bloc Populaire were aggravated when, in mid-February, Maxime Raymond became seriously ill. The health of the Bloc leader had never been robust, but it was now a question of whether or not Raymond would be able to continue as leader. While the Devoir minimized the seriousness of Raymond's attack with the report, "son état est satisfaisant mais on le tient à l'hôpital pour quelques jours,"⁶⁸ it was to be, in reality, a matter of weeks of hospitalization followed by months of slow recovery at Raymond's country home at Woodlands. Raymond's absence increased the strain on the rather delicate balance of relations within the party. Raymond had assumed personal responsibility to date for most of the major decisions, and it was Raymond who acted as the common link between the disparate factions within the group. In particular, Maxime Raymond had appeared to be the one person with whom Edouard Lacroix had been willing to co-operate.

Rumours continued to circulate about the coalition of the Bloc Populaire forces with this group or that. Following the debate on the speech from the throne, during which the federal Bloc members supported a Cardin amendment, rumours multiplied of a possible merger with Cardin, or of the dissolution of the Bloc to make way for a group led by Cardin.

The Bloc vigourously denied the possibility of any such move:

Le Bloc Populaire Canadien ignore les intentions présentes et futures de M. Cardin. Mais pour ce qui le regarde, il nie catégoriquement le bien-fondé de ces rumeurs qui ne correspondent à aucune réalité. Il est et demeure un mouvement politique indépendant et il se reconnaît un seul chef: Maxime Raymond.⁶⁹

The tempo of the party's activities in the Quebec district also began to accelerate, beginning with two large rallies in the Eastern Townships at Magog and at Sherbrooke on Sunday, 21 February. They also marked the resumption of an active role in the party by Philippe Hamel, who appeared as the main speaker at both assemblies along with André Laurendeau and Philippe Girard.⁷⁰ However, he and René Châloult did not appear as advertised the following week at Shawinigan. Although their absence was explained by "la grippe"⁷¹ their dissatisfaction with their situation in the party provides cause to speculate. Hamel still described the situation as "pénible, presque insupportable," but indicated the complexity of their position by observing to Gouin that they could not now withdraw from the party "sans subir un discrédit irréparable, car l'heure semble décisive."⁷² The absence of Maxime Raymond removed any check on the ambitions of Lacroix who, Gouin felt,

... profite de la maladie de M. Raymond pour pousser son ours ... J'ai toute raison de croire que si par hasard M. Raymond était forcé, par raison de santé, d'abandonner la direction active du mouvement, pendant les élections et après, Lacroix réussirait, par la force des choses et de son argent, à s'imposer comme chef.⁷³

Gouin could also foresee an even worse danger. He remarked that many of the Bloc members in positions of authority within the party, while "honnêtes gens," did not share the trio's ideas on

reforms. Gouin felt that these people would attempt to isolate himself, Hamel, and Chaloult, while at the same time, "cherchant à nous utiliser jusqu'à l'extrême limite de notre influence sur le peuple."⁷⁴ While Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult might succeed in winning election, once elected they would be alone, as this group would see that the trio's supporters were eliminated. Gouin expressed the fear that they were once more beginning the experience of 1936, that they were contributing to the success of a movement "qui sera une nouvelle déception pour le peuple, un nouvel échec pour la cause nationaliste!"⁷⁵ The trio would frequently express this fear in the coming months and it would exert a significant influence on their actions. However, there was little the three could do about the situation until Raymond recovered. In March a team of Bloc members, including Philippe Hamel and René Chaloult, invaded the Chicoutimi and Lac Saint-Jean region with a series of rallies which seemed to provoke a favourable response in the centers visited.⁷⁶ The speakers outlined the aims of the Bloc Populaire and answered questions about the new party, one of which was invariably a request to explain the Bloc attitude towards Social Credit. René Chaloult's reply at Chicoutimi, that the party sympathized with the objectives of the Social Credit movement but could not endorse its methods, was a typical response.⁷⁷ Maxime Raymond sent greetings to the meetings by telegram, assuring the public that he would soon resume the battle. The party also issued a categorical denial that Raymond had any intention of resigning as leader:

Comme nous avons autre chose à faire qu'à pourchasser des canards, nous répétons une fois pour toutes, que ces rumeurs [of Raymond's resignation] sont fausses ... Il n'est pas question du départ de M. Raymond. Il n'en a jamais été question non plus.⁷⁸

The Lac Saint-Jean meetings were followed by an enthusiastic meeting in Montreal which featured Paul Gouin, with the support of Philippe Hamel and René Chaloult. Gouin's address posed the question, "Que devons-nous attendre du Bloc?" and, speaking as a sort of "outsider" for the evening, he defined the policies which he felt the Bloc should include in its programme.⁷⁹

The Montreal meeting was followed by two simultaneous rallies in Quebec City on 11 April, which included not only Paul Gouin and Philippe Hamel, but Edouard Lacroix as well.⁸⁰

In spite of this increased activity, the Bloc Populaire by April 1943 still did not have a written platform. Although a committee to study the platform had been formed in October 1942, it had as yet produced no results and, when the topic had been mentioned at the caucus meeting on 10 January, discussion of the platform had been postponed. However, Paul Gouin had expressed his concern over the lack of a written platform in his speech in Montreal on 27 February and he continued to push for the adoption of such a platform. In April Marie-Louis Beaulieu of Quebec City unofficially assumed the responsibility of drafting a specific platform for the party, consulting both Paul Gouin and Philippe Hamel on the measures which they felt should be included.⁸¹ The draft platform was to be discussed by a party caucus in Montreal on 1 May.

There is some evidence that, in presenting for approval an official platform which would include the various anti-trust measures which the nationalists hoped to introduce, Gouin hoped to force the hand of Edouard Lacroix, since Gouin felt that Lacroix would balk at accepting such a platform.⁸² However, any such plan failed as an official report of the caucus of 1 May shows no objection from Lacroix on any of the more contentious issues.⁸³ However, at that time Lacroix revealed the exact nature of the agreement between himself and Raymond concerning financing of the party. Lacroix was, in fact, paying the monthly expenses of the Bloc Populaire in the district of Quebec City, a sum of about six hundred dollars a month. According to their plans, Lacroix would not only pay for organizational expenses in Quebec City, but would also provide the sum of \$1,000 for each constituency in the Quebec region in the event of a provincial election. However, Lacroix imposed one reservation. Fulfillment of his promise for financial support was conditional on his approval of the party platform.⁸⁴

The main points of the draft platform were approved in principle and, rather than forcing a confrontation with Lacroix, it had to a certain extent reinforced his position, since the caucus agreed to accept his financial support. Nor were the difficulties experienced by Dr. Hamel and his associates in the district of Quebec alleviated to any degree. According to René Chaloult, circumstances in their district became increasingly more difficult after the rallies on 11 April:

... la cabale reprenait avec une vigueur accrue. Les activités du bureau n'étaient plus dirigées que contre nous. La situation [était] devenue complètement intolérable ...⁸⁵

René Chaloult and Philippe Hamel protested most vehemently against the preponderant role assumed by Lacroix, and they were supported in their demands for changes by other Bloc activists in Quebec City such as Marie-Louis Beaulieu, Pierre Letarte, and Victor Trépanier. In early May Hamel and Chaloult informed Gauthier that they were suspending their participation in activities of the party in protest over the failure to initiate the subscription campaign, or the "vente des timbres."⁸⁶ As May passed with no sign of improvement, the group opposing Lacroix decided to force the issue. As Chaloult later explained to Raymond,

... nous avons alors résolu, tous ensemble de Québec avec plusieurs amis de Montréal, à cause de votre maladie qui se prolongeait d'une manière inquiétante, et pour sauver le mouvement, d'exclure Lacroix, cause unique de tous les maux ...⁸⁷

In the absence of any action from Raymond, the group hoped to convince the more influential members of the party to sign a statement declaring that Lacroix had been excluded from the Bloc Populaire. A document dated at Quebec City on 1 June 1943⁸⁸ reads to that effect. Stating that in consideration of Raymond's illness and the possibility that it would be some time before he could resume active direction of the party, and considering that it had been incontestably proven that the presence of Edouard Lacroix was a menace to the movement, the document concluded:

Nous soussignés, dirigeants du Bloc populaire canadien, entièrement soumis à monsieur Maxime Raymond, son fondateur et son chef, et convaincus d'agir dans l'intérêt du mouvement qu'il a fondé, excluons monsieur Edouard Lacroix du Bloc populaire canadien.⁸⁹

This document, signed by René Chaloult, Dr. Philippe Hamel, Marie-Louis Beaulieu, Pierre Letarte, and Victor Trepanier, was apparently sent to Paul Gouin in Montreal to be signed by himself, Jean Martineau, André Laurendeau, and Philippe Girard, and by as many of the other directors at Montreal as possible.⁹⁰ The document would then be entrusted to the secretary general of the Bloc, followed by an official public statement announcing the fait accompli.

The attempt, however, failed, possibly due to the refusal of either André Laurendeau or Philippe Girard to sign the document. Both, although sympathetic to the difficult position of the group in Quebec City, continued loyally to support Raymond throughout the dispute, and may have interpreted the manoeuvre as a revolt against Raymond's leadership. But the need for a solution to the conflict between Hamel and Lacroix became more critical with the announcement on Saturday, 12 June of federal by-elections in the constituencies of Montreal-Cartier and Stanstead for 9 August.⁹¹ The following Tuesday Maxime Raymond issued a statement to the effect that the Bloc Populaire would definitely be represented in the Stanstead by-election.⁹² However, any attempt by the Bloc Populaire to conduct a campaign under the existing circumstances would most certainly be undermined by the continuing feud between Dr. Hamel and Edouard Lacroix.

Unable to unite the rest of the Bloc leaders to force Lacroix's exclusion from the party, Hamel and Chaloult once again tried to persuade Maxime Raymond to break with "le Beauceron." On 14 June Hamel wrote Chanoine Groulx, outlining their position and asking him to intercede with Raymond on their behalf:

Lacroix doit partir. Les inconvénients à le garder ne se comparent pas aux avantages que nous procurerait son départ.⁹³

René Chaloult travelled to Montreal to consult with both Groulx and Georges Pelletier, of Le Devoir, arguing not only on behalf of himself, but also for Marie-Louis Beaulieu, Dr. Hamel, Victor Trépanier, and Armand Viau.⁹⁴ However, both Pelletier and Groulx counselled Hamel and Chaloult to remain with the Bloc and to cope as best as possible with a situation which could very likely be temporary.⁹⁵ Requested by Maxime Raymond to participate in support of a Bloc candidate in Stanstead, Dr. Hamel replied on 21 June that he first needed the assurance that, after the campaign in Stanstead, he would no longer be "sous la tutelle d'un Edouard Lacroix," and that he would officially become Raymond's lieutenant in the Quebec district.⁹⁶ Raymond rejected what he considered to be an ultimatum from Hamel, and, according to Hamel, attributed the request to Hamel's own personal ambition.⁹⁷ Raymond remained convinced throughout the conflict that it was merely a question of a personal feud between Philippe Hamel and Edouard Lacroix.⁹⁸ However, Dr. Hamel refused to risk the compromise of his previous efforts in the nationalist cause. To Groulx's urgings to work towards a Bloc victory in

Stanstead he replied that, if Lacroix was his commander before the campaign began, he would be even more so afterwards, "car son argent exercera une influence contre moi qui serai devenu sans importance, une fois la victoire gagnée. Ce sera la répétition de 1936."⁹⁹ He reiterated his trust in Raymond's personal integrity, but felt that Raymond realized neither the dangers involved in the influence exerted over the Bloc by Lacroix, nor the amount of work which still faced the party. Dr. Hamel stated that he was prepared to campaign for the Bloc, but only on condition that he have complete authority as Raymond's "premier lieutenant" in the district of Quebec:

Je refuse catégoriquement d'être commandé directement ou indirectement par M. Edouard Lacroix. Je réclame une main sur les leviers de commande. Si M. Raymond refuse de m'accorder cette confiance, il portera la responsabilité, et non moi, de ce qui adviendra du Bloc.¹⁰⁰

Both Paul Gouin and René Chaloult supported Dr. Hamel's decision to abstain from the campaign. In a long letter dated 29 July, René Chaloult explained to Maxime Raymond the reasons for his refusal to campaign in Stanstead. By conferring on Lacroix the responsibility of directly financing the district of Quebec, he wrote, rather than contributing to a central campaign fund, Raymond had given Lacroix the authority to supervise the spending of his money, and by that means dominate the organization:

Point n'est besoin d'ailleurs d'être grand clerc en politique pour savoir que le détenteur de la caisse est le véritable détenteur de l'autorité.¹⁰¹

Chaloult reconfirmed his faith in Raymond's sincerity and commitment to the nationalist cause, but he felt that Raymond

had become the victim of the schemes of Lacroix. In spite of Raymond's good intentions, Chaloult warned the Bloc leader that he could not support the campaign in Stanstead unless their grievances were satisfied and, later, after the by-election was over, he would feel compelled to publicly explain the reasons for his actions to his constituency. However, he would not play Lacroix's game and leave the party, but remaining a Bloc member he would feel it his duty to "démasquer avec fermeté notre second Duplessis."¹⁰²

Victor Trépanier of Quebec City also refused at first to participate in the by-election in Stanstead. After considerable thought and hesitation, Trépanier wrote Raymond on 22 July that he would not be active with the Bloc in Stanstead, or anywhere else, until the party had formulated a precise and complete platform and until Edouard Lacroix had resumed his proper role in the party.¹⁰³ Trépanier predicted that unless definite changes were introduced, the Bloc would be dead at Quebec City within a few months. The party organization at Quebec City was incompetent and without prestige, he claimed, and the eventual success of the Bloc throughout the province would be impossible "si dans les trente-cinq comtés du district du Québec elle dort son dernier sommeil dans le cimetière de l'indifférence où l'a portée l'insignifiance de ses représentants attitrés à Québec."¹⁰⁴ Without Dr. Hamel, Paul Gouin, or René Chaloult, Trépanier continued, he could not seriously envisage a third party, particularly a movement dedicated to nationalist

ideals and social reform. His conviction was based not only on the ever-growing personal prestige the three had acquired through their past activities in the nationalist cause, but also on the belief that,

le Bloc Populaire n'est pas né uniquement depuis le plébiscite, il est une phase de ce mouvement nationaliste lancé pour une grande part par les efforts héroïques et souvent méconnus de Messieurs Hamel, Gouin, et Chaloult qui se battent depuis des années et qui n'ont jamais changé un iota à leur doctrine et à leur ligne de conduite.¹⁰⁵

Trépanier's letter was a long and frank exposition of the position of the trio, and he forwarded a copy of it to Chanoine Groulx at Montreal with the request that Groulx do everything he could to convince Raymond of the urgency of keeping Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult within the movement. Groulx responded with an equally frank reply which fully supported Maxime Raymond's actions and urged Trépanier to reconsider. Expressing his disillusionment with politics and the men involved, Groulx refused to make any more overtures on behalf of the trio to Maxime Raymond.¹⁰⁶ While he granted that perhaps the Bloc was not a viable possibility without Gouin, Hamel and Chaloult, it was even less so without Raymond as leader. He explained that the leadership of Maxime Raymond was conditional to retaining the support of Georges Pelletier and Le Devoir, even as the support of the newspaper had been necessary before Raymond would agree to accept the leadership.¹⁰⁷ Yet, according to Groulx, the "ultimatums" and "threats" of the trio were pushing Raymond close to resigning. The accusation of an agreement or "cartel" between Raymond and Lacroix for the division of the leadership

of the movement could well be the last straw which would prompt Raymond "à tout lâcher." In addition, Groulx confided, Raymond had been warned by "un homme de grande autorité et de caractère indiscutable" that after Lacroix, Raymond himself would be the next target of the trio.¹⁰⁸ Confessing complete faith in "la haute conscience" of Raymond, Groulx denied that there had been any agreement between Raymond and Lacroix over the division of the leadership, and rejected the assertion that the Bloc would be another deception in the manner of Duplessis. Raymond's intention was not to make the rest of the Quebec district the "slaves" of Lacroix, Groulx explained, but rather,

Monsieur Raymond se croit tout bonnement en face de deux factions qui voudraient s'exclure du Bloc l'une et l'autre, non pas tant pour des divergences d'idées que pour des divergences de sentiments. Il se refuse à exclure l'une ou l'autre; il les croit nécessaires toutes les deux à la cause nationale; il s'acharne à les concilier.¹⁰⁹

How could Raymond have inaugurated the campaign in Stanstead, Groulx inquired, by excluding from the Bloc the only two federal members of parliament who had joined the group? Personally, Groulx wrote Trépanier, he felt that the by-election in Stanstead was a very inopportune moment for the trio to "s'en laver les mains et rentrer chez eux." Groulx suggested three considerations which should take precedence over all others: the cause itself, which should require any sacrifice; the character of Raymond which was above any shameful compromise or betrayal; and the improbability that Lacroix was an insurmountable obstacle for the people which the Bloc and the trio would attract. Groulx concluded effectively:

L'avenir dira, j'en ai peur, qu'une occasion unique s'était offerte, vers 1943, aux Canadiens français de ressaisir les rênes de leur vie politique et nationale. La tentative avorta parce que les principaux chefs manquèrent de l'esprit de discipline et que leur génération était encore trop envoutée par le vieux démon de la chicane.¹¹⁰

Groulx's arguments proved to be very effective with Victor Trépanier who left for Stanstead the afternoon of receiving the letter.¹¹¹ His participation in the by-election seems to have resulted in a transfer of loyalty from the Gouin-Hamel-Chaloult group to a closer identification with Maxime Raymond. Stanstead was significant in the internal relations of the party in this way, strengthening the loyalty to Maxime Raymond of those who were active in the by-election, and in turn widening the gap between them and the dissident trio.

While the Bloc Populaire had not been as energetic in its activities as Dr. Hamel felt that it should be, the party had made some preparations for the approaching by-election. Its activities had increased in the latter part of May and throughout June with a series of public meetings conducted by Edouard Lacroix and Dr. Pierre Gauthier in the rural areas of the district of Quebec.¹¹² The Bloc also continued its weekly radio broadcasts which had been a regular feature of the party's program for some time. Bloc speakers focused primarily on current controversial issues, generally of federal interest. Considerable attention was concentrated on the recent voting of another billion dollar loan to assist the Allied war cause, and the decision of Prime Minister King to postpone the revision of the electoral map called for at that time by the constitution.¹¹³ However, this

was far from the intensive activity required during an election; the coming by-election would severely test the ability of the Bloc to wage a successful campaign.

The disagreement between Raymond and the trio also represented a serious problem for the Bloc Populaire. In view of the trio's refusal to support the Bloc in the Stanstead by-election, André Laurendeau, Philippe Girard, and Jean Drapeau advised that the party abstain from the contest so as not to further weaken the party. Maxime Raymond, however, insisted that the Bloc Populaire present a candidate.¹¹⁴

The decision was first made to concentrate all the party's energies on the constituency of Stanstead where the Bloc felt the circumstances to be more favorable to the election of a Bloc candidate.¹¹⁵ The vacancy in Stanstead had been caused by judicial invalidation of the victory in the previous election of the official Liberal candidate, R.G. Davidson, because of irregularities on the part of his organizers. Although approximately two-thirds of the voters in Stanstead were French Canadian, the constituency usually elected an English-speaking member to Ottawa.¹¹⁶ Yet, Stanstead had voted sixty-three percent "no" in the plebiscite of April 1942, the main factor which encouraged the Bloc Populaire. As Le Devoir pointed out in an editorial on 17 June:

Les électeurs de langue française à Stanstead se doivent de songer avant tout à leurs propres intérêts ... Charité bien ordonnée commence par soi-même; ... qu'ils ne laissent pas passer cette occasion d'envoyer à Ottawa un représentant qui puisse être leur véritable interprète au cours de la période critique que nous traversons.¹¹⁷

The Bloc felt the chances of a victory in Cartier to be much less encouraging. The population was extremely cosmopolitan, with a large Jewish vote. Although the majority was probably slightly in favour of the French Canadian population, Cartier had traditionally been a Jewish seat.¹¹⁸ Further discouragement was presented by the Cartier vote in the plebiscite which had been seventy percent "yes."¹¹⁹

The Bloc Populaire placed special significance on the contest in Stanstead. In a radio broadcast on 7 July André Laurendeau clearly stated that the Bloc considered the main issue in the Stanstead by-election to be the war policies of the Mackenzie King government.¹²⁰ The election of a Liberal candidate, he pointed out, would allow the Prime Minister to claim that French Canadians did not oppose his policies. However, the election of a Bloc candidate would prove that Quebec still opposed conscription and that the province had not changed its mind on this crucial issue since April of 1942. A candidate to represent the Bloc Populaire, "un citoyen de valeur ayant occupé des fonctions importantes dans Stanstead," had already been chosen, and Laurendeau appealed to the electors of Stanstead to realize that they represented the whole province, urging them to carry out this responsibility by defeating the Liberals.¹²¹

The name of the candidate was announced the following day in a statement by Bloc leader, Maxime Raymond. The Bloc Populaire would be represented in the Stanstead by-election by Armand Choquette, a thirty-eight old farmer of the district,

diocesan president of the Union Catholique des Cultivateurs, and father of nine.¹²² Choquette had also been active in several community organizations and had served as president of the Société de Saint-Jean-Baptiste. Pointing out that the circumstances gave the by-election "une portée nationale", Raymond declared that the contest was an opportunity to present to Ottawa "une claire protestation contre l'impérialisme militaire et financier de nos gouvernants."¹²³ This same theme was reinforced a few days later in a radio broadcast by Jean Drapeau who called on the voters once again to repudiate the conscriptionist policies of Prime Minister King.¹²⁴ Drapeau also included in his speech several topics which would also be issued during the coming campaign: the shortage of labour, particularly agricultural; certain types of rationing; taxes which weighed unfairly on the family; and the employment of women in factories.

Armand Choquette made his first appearance as a Bloc Populaire candidate on 11 July at a relatively small gathering at his birthplace of Sainte-Catherine de Hatley. Speaking with Philippe Girard and Dr. Pierre Gauthier, Choquette declared his determination to continue the fight of the plebiscite in the constituency of Stanstead "sur une plus haute échelle."¹²⁵ The campaign was officially opened the following Sunday, 18 July, by two well-attended rallies in the most important centers of the constituency, Magog and Coaticook. Choquette spoke only briefly, leaving the majority of the platform time to speakers such as Edouard Lacroix, who denounced the cost of the war;

André Laurendeau, who predicted that conscription would eventually be necessitated by increased casualties resulting from an invasion of Europe; and Dr. Pierre Gauthier, who pointed out the irony in Mackenzie King's betrayal of Quebec, the province which had brought him to power and had maintained him there.¹²⁶ A more complete enunciation of Choquette's campaign platform was included in a radio address by the Bloc candidate broadcast the following evening. Conscription was again a major topic. Pointing out that in 1917 prominent Liberals had opposed Borden and his government in the same terms as the Bloc Populaire now opposed Liberals, Choquette argued:

La conscription n'est pas devenue une bonne mesure parce qu'elle est patronnée par M. King. Mauvaise hier, elle est également mauvaise aujourd'hui, parce qu'elle apparaît comme la manifestation extérieure de cet impérialisme militaire qui s'oppose directement à nos intérêts.¹²⁷

However, Choquette also devoted considerable time to a discussion of the problems of agriculture and labour, denouncing the government's apparent lack of concern for these two groups "dont les tâches sont les plus lourdes et les revenus moins élevés."¹²⁸ According to the Bloc candidate, the Liberals continued generous support of the war effort while farmers suffered from lack of manpower, machinery, and supplies, and the worker struggled with the perplexities of meeting high prices with an insufficient pay check. As a farmer and former president of the U.C.C., Choquette identified particularly with the farmers, but he also emphasized the problems common to both agriculture and labour, and the disadvantaged position shared by both in the current

economic system. The issues emphasized by Choquette during this radio speech would continue to dominate his campaign. The opposition to conscription continued to be the main issue for the Bloc Populaire, but it also made a strong appeal to the workers and farmers by showing a special concern for the problems of these two groups.

The most serious opposition to the Bloc Populaire in Stanstead came from the official Liberal candidate, R.G. Davidson, whose election had been judicially invalidated although no blame in the matter had been attached to Davidson himself.¹²⁹ During the early stages of the campaign the names of two Liberal independents were also mentioned, although the candidacy of neither materialized on nomination day, 2 August. When nominations were accepted the only other candidate was Pierre Thomas representing the C.C.F. The possibility of an independent candidate which might have weakened the position of the Bloc Populaire had been avoided when Donat Martin, an independent candidate supported by federal members Jean-François Pouliot, Sasseville Roy, and Frédéric Dorion, and aided by several of Duplessis' followers, announced on 1 August that he would not file nomination papers.¹³⁰ Reiterating his conviction that his candidature had been justified and expressing complete lack of confidence in the federal members of the Bloc Populaire, Martin announced that he was withdrawing to prevent "la division des forces opposées aux extravagances de la politique actuelle de la guerre."¹³¹

The Liberal party generously supported the candidacy of Davidson with manpower and, it would seem, money. However, the evident sympathy in many areas for the Bloc Populaire forced the Liberals to undertake a more low-key campaign than that conducted by the Bloc, frequently using a door-to-door approach in preference to large gatherings. Both federal and provincial Liberal members appeared or spoke in support of Davidson. Gaspard Fauteux, member of Parliament for Sainte-Marie, was interrupted several times by demonstrations in support of the Bloc during a Liberal rally on 25 July.¹³² The rally that evening, one of the main Liberal gatherings of the campaign, included other federal members such as T.A. Fontaine (S. Hyacinthe-Bagot), J.-H. Blanchette (Compton), and Maurice Gingues (Sherbrooke). Minister of Public Works, Alphonse Fournier, active throughout the campaign, also joined the platform party, as did Minister of Justice, Louis St. Laurent, one of the main speakers. St. Laurent straightforwardly defended his party's war policy by arguing that the time to win the war was now, in Europe, and not to wait until it reached Canadian shores:

Oui, la guerre est détestable et détestée ... S'il y avait un moyen d'éviter la guerre, nous l'éviterions. Faire la guerre, c'est une épreuve. Il y a une chose de pire que faire la guerre, c'est perdre la guerre.¹³³

The war would not be won with speeches, St. Laurent concluded, and the country had no need of a "bloc populaire", only French Canadians "qui savent se tenir debout."¹³⁴

General LaFlèche, War Services Minister, was also active in the direction of the campaign and met with the officials of

Dominion Textile, the main industrial concern in Magog, promising the workers satisfaction to many of their complaints.¹³⁵ Nor were rank and file workers lacking. According to the Bloc Populaire, over three hundred Liberal "agents" were active in the Stanstead constituency, concentrating on a door to door campaign, and money and favours were in abundant supply.¹³⁶ One of the main tasks of the Liberals was defending their war policies, but their strategy also included discrediting the Bloc Populaire. The Bloc Populaire reported to Le Devoir that the Liberals were circulating propaganda predicting that the Bloc would lead Quebec into isolation from the other provinces, and that Maxime Raymond would ruin the workers by over-encouragement of the strike weapon.¹³⁷

The Bloc Populaire also led an energetic campaign in spite of the absence of its more experienced leaders. Maxime Raymond was still convalescing at his country home, but recorded a speech which was broadcast over the radio on 28 July. The issue in question was unmistakably clear, Raymond told his listeners:

De quoi s'agit-il dans Stanstead et dans Montréal-Cartier? De juger la politique de guerre de M. King. Nous allons dire si nous approuvons les budgets excessifs, les taxes antifamiliales et les cadeaux annuels d'un milliard. Nous allons dire si nous sommes satisfaits de la conscription pour service n'importe où.¹³⁸

André Laurendeau, secretary general of the party, frequently represented Raymond at party meetings, and Philippe Girard, organizer for the Montreal district, assumed the responsibility of organizing the Bloc campaign in Stanstead. Edouard Lacroix

appeared at the opening rally, but then did not appear again until the closing days of the campaign. The trio of Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult was conspicuously absent. Dr. Hamel stood firmly by his decision not to participate in the Bloc campaign unless his demands were met. Nor did a letter from Chanoine Groulx late in July urging Dr. Hamel to help in Stanstead, emphasizing the importance of the election and warning that a Liberal victory could result in the immediate application of conscription for over-seas duty, in any way alter Hamel's refusal.¹³⁹

The lack of experienced leadership of the Bloc in Stanstead was readily compensated by the activity and energy of its campaigners. Although Paul Massé was announced as a Bloc Populaire candidate in Montréal-Cartier on 22 July, the main thrust of the party's attack continued to be concentrated on Stanstead. Although Armand Choquette, with his association with the U.C.C., was a desirable candidate in an area where agriculture was significant, the emphasis was most definitely on the party rather than on the candidate. In fact, the presence of Choquette was frequently eclipsed at Bloc gatherings by that of more well known Bloc party members. Philippe Girard enjoyed considerable influence as a result of his past activities in the labour movement and because of his participation as a labour organizer in the 1937 strike in Magog against Dominion Textiles, an advantage utilized to the full by the Bloc.¹⁴⁰ The Bloc campaign also emphasized the defence of the textile workers during that same strike by Maxime Raymond in the House of

Commons. Taken together, Choquette's background in agriculture and Girard's association with the labour elements increased the chances of the Bloc Populaire of winning the vote of the two overwhelmingly important occupational groups in the constituency.

The Bloc campaigned primarily through rallies and meetings in various centers throughout the constituency, but the party also sponsored numerous radio broadcasts which appealed to the voters of both Stanstead and Cartier. While conscription and the Liberal war policies in general again frequently appeared as topics, the radio broadcasts also provided the Bloc with an opportunity to emphasize other aspects of its programme. These included the Bloc's support of a "politique familiale" which would introduce taxes to assist rather than penalize large families;¹⁴¹ the party's opposition to the Liberal policy of massive immigration and preference for British immigrants;¹⁴² its desire to see more reasonable taxes and its conviction that the results of these taxes should be spent solely in Canada, for Canadians;¹⁴³ and the Bloc's opposition to the expanding role of women in industry and the armed forces.¹⁴⁴

The highlight of the campaign was undoubtedly the appearance of Henri Bourassa in support of Choquette at Magog on the afternoon of Sunday, 1 August.¹⁴⁵ Although almost seventy-five years old, Bourassa easily demonstrated that he was not yet "un vieillard qui est à la veille de mourir," the terms in which Jean-François Pouliot had recently referred to

him. Refusing to pass judgment on Canada's decision to enter the war, Bourassa condemned the policies which the Liberal government had formulated to guide Canada through the war and the effects which these policies had produced on the country. In particular, Bourassa criticized the various orders-in-council and laws introduced since the beginning of the war, which curtailed what he felt to be essential freedoms, the hardships inflicted by the war on the farmers, the demoralizing effect of the war on the family life of Canadians, and the drain of manpower and material wealth which the war had imposed on the country. Canadians should not accept policies resulting in such conditions, Bourassa admonished, simply because they were put forward by the party which they may have traditionally supported:

... ce que je souhaite, ce que j'ai demandé tant de fois à mes compatriotes, c'est de placer au-dessus du parti, le pays, la famille, la religion, l'ordre social.¹⁴⁶

There was only one way to make the government understand that it was time to "apply the brakes", Bourassa concluded, and that was to concentrate their votes on Armand Choquette, the "candidat des agriculteurs et candidat des ouvriers."¹⁴⁷

The public reception at the numerous Bloc rallies and meetings was certainly encouraging for the young party. The final weekend before the election the Bloc was represented at meetings throughout the constituency. Edouard Lacroix was again present, speaking both Saturday afternoon and evening in support of Choquette.¹⁴⁸ Sunday morning Bloc meetings were held after mass in almost every parish in the constituency, many of which took the form of "assemblées contradictoires" between Bloc

Populaire and Liberal supporters. Edouard Lacroix participated in two of these debates, the type of confrontation in which he was particularly skilled, as did a long list of Bloc supporters from throughout the province. Sunday afternoon André Laurendeau and Jean Drapeau held a meeting particularly for women in Coaticook,¹⁴⁹ and the Bloc campaign closed that evening with two rallies in Magog and one in Coaticook.¹⁵⁰ Large crowds in both centers applauded Bloc speakers which included the candidate, Armand Choquette, and Edouard Lacroix, Pierre Letarte, Fernand Chaussé, Philippe Girard, Pierre Gauthier, André Laurendeau, Jean Drapeau, and Victor Trépanier.

The decision of Paul Massé, a Montreal lawyer, to run as the Bloc Populaire candidate in the Montreal constituency of Cartier came late in the campaign and the reasons for the decision are not clear. Possibly the Bloc was encouraged by the presence of three other candidates in the race, all of Jewish nationality, and hoped to consolidate the French Canadian vote behind its candidate. When Raymond announced Massé's candidacy on 22 July, Massé actually joined four other contenders for the seat: Lazarus Phillips, the Liberal candidate; David Lewis, the C.C.F. candidate; Fred Rose, the Labour-Progressive candidate; and Philippe Monette who had just announced his candidacy as an independent.¹⁵¹ However, Monette had withdrawn from the election by nomination day.

Paul Massé's campaign was disadvantaged from the outset by its late start and the fact that the majority of the Bloc's resources were focused in Stanstead. He was also the

only French Canadian Catholic candidate in a traditionally Jewish riding. However, there was also a large population of new Canadians in Cartier and Paul Massé enjoyed the advantage of being fluent in several languages and having close friends among several of the ethnic groups in the constituency.¹⁵²

Although the Bloc was dubious about his chances and only three weeks remained until election date, Massé, with Michel Chartrand as his campaign manager, began to organize his campaign in Cartier.

As in Stanstead, the main issue promoted by the Bloc Populaire in Cartier was its opposition to the war policies of the Liberal government. Massé first outlined his platform during a radio broadcast on 27 July. If the Bloc candidate were not elected in Cartier, Massé warned his listeners, it would be impossible to escape conscription for over-seas duty, the bankruptcy of the country, and racial conflict.¹⁵³ He pointed out that all the other parties--the Liberals, the C.C.F., and the Labour Progressives--were calling for a total war effort. However, in the constituency of Cartier, only the Jewish voters (and for good reasons from their own point of view, he admitted) favoured such a policy. French Canadians and the large number of new Canadians of Polish, Russian, German, and Hungarian origin opposed conscription and a greater war effort. On the basis of frequent conversations with members of these groups, Massé claimed that the new Canadians also opposed conscription and military imperialism, the very system which they had left Europe to escape. While Massé admitted deep sympathy for the

suffering of those of the Jewish race, he added the old maxim that "charity begins at home ":

A quoi nous servirait d'avoir sauvé l'Europe et amélioré le sort de tous les Juifs de l'univers, si nous ne sommes plus là pour jouir des fruits de la victoire ou encore si nous soyons obligés de vivre en esclavage dans un monde pour lequel nous aurons conquis la liberté et la richesse.¹⁵⁴

In addition to attacking the war policies of the Liberal government Massé also had harsh criticisms to make of the C.C.F. and Labour-Progressive parties. The economic and social reforms of the C.C.F. were simply the "chocolat qui dore la pilule et la rend plus facile à avaler."¹⁵⁵ Nor had the C.C.F. anything new to offer Quebec. The best reforms of the C.C.F. had been first sponsored in 1935 by the Action Libérale Nationale. He also accused the socialist party of supporting the war effort and being strongly centralist in nature.¹⁵⁶ Massé was even more emphatic in his denunciation of Fred Rose, the "Communist" candidate. Whatever Canadians had suffered from British imperialists and "Jingoes," he warned, an even greater danger lay in encouraging "un autre impérialisme dix fois pire que le premier qui ferait de nous les esclaves de la Russie communiste."¹⁵⁷

On the positive side, Paul Massé pointed out the concern of the Bloc Populaire for social and economic reforms such as higher salaries, family allowances, unemployment insurance which was not a "farce," regulated control of natural resources, and the abolition of the trusts. More immediately he called for the cessation of donations of millions of dollars to England, and policies towards the workers and farmers which placed the needs of the country before the demands of the war.¹⁵⁸

While Massé did not specifically direct his campaign against the Jewish segment of the population, he made no particular appeal to them and concentrated instead on winning the support of the French Canadians and of the various ethnic groups or new Canadians:

Nous devrions nous unir avec nos compatriotes des autres origines qui veulent que le Canada soit vraiment leur pays. Si nous voulons nous unir avec eux, et c'est possible, et le comté de Cartier symbolise bien cette possibilité, nous pourrions ensemble faire en sorte que le Canada soit gouverné dans le sens de ses intérêts supérieurs.¹⁵⁹

Although Massé was more of a central figure in his campaign in Cartier than Choquette appeared to be in Stanstead, he also received significant support from other Bloc members. As in Stanstead, the highlight of the Bloc campaign in Cartier was the appearance of Henri Bourassa in favour of Massé. According to Le Devoir, approximately ten thousand people gathered at the Olier school the evening of 5 August to hear the veteran nationalist and other Bloc speakers such as Jean Drapeau and André Laurendeau.¹⁶⁰ Although no longer active politically and belonging to no political party, not even the Bloc Populaire, Bourassa explained that he had come to address the electors of Cartier as a sign of his esteem for Maxime Raymond and for the group of young people concerned with defending the national cause and recreating a public conscience. Bourassa protested against the "politique de suicide nationale" supported at Ottawa by politicians in the service of English, American, and Canadian capital.¹⁶¹ Nor were the values for which England fought either idealistic or worthy, Bourassa claimed, but were

rather "des valeurs de bourse" which assured the marriage of the American dollar and the pound sterling.¹⁶²

The other three parties all made a strong bid for the Jewish vote in Cartier. Both David Lewis, the C.C.F. candidate, and Fred Rose, the Labour Progressive candidate, campaigned on platforms of strong social and economic reform which would appeal to the workers among the voters. The Liberals attacked the Bloc Populaire as being anti-semitic and fascist, and Paul Massé was accused of being the right-hand man of Adrien Arcand.¹⁶³

The results in both Stanstead and Cartier encouraged the Bloc Populaire and caused consternation in Liberal circles. Armand Choquette won the Stanstead seat for the Bloc with over thirteen hundred votes more than second runner Davidson. Labour Progressive candidate, Fred Rose, took the Cartier constituency but Paul Massé trailed him by only one hundred and fifty votes.¹⁶⁴ The Liberal candidate Phillips placed only third.

The victory in Stanstead had been ardently hoped for by the Bloc Populaire and several factors were significant in its realization. Of perhaps prime importance was the large percentage of French Canadian voters who had already indicated their opposition to conscription in the plebiscite and who now had shown little change of feeling. The ability of the Bloc to capitalize on Choquette's background in agriculture as both a farmer and president of the U.C.C., and on Philippe Girard's influence among the workers also significantly increased the chances of the Bloc Populaire. Finally, the aggressive campaign conducted by the Bloc cannot be overlooked. The party had

demonstrated that it could organize an effective and energetic campaign on a small scale, and the experience would be useful in meeting the challenge of provincial elections which were expected within the year.

Although the Bloc Populaire did not win the seat of Cartier, the party made a more than creditable showing, particularly in view of the late date at which it began its campaign. The result of the vote indicated that the Bloc enjoyed the support of most the French Canadian voters of Cartier, and the loss of the seat to Fred Rose was a further blow to the Liberals.

The proof of support for the party came at a crucial moment for the Bloc Populaire at a time when it was seriously divided internally. The Stanstead victory provided the Bloc with confidence and resulted in a new cohesiveness among those who had participated in the campaign. However, it did not solve the crucial problem of the conflict between Edouard Lacroix and the trio of Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult. The presence of Lacroix in Stanstead, however brief, could work to the advantage of the member from La Beauce. The trio had abstained from the contest and would now have to consider seriously their course of action. The victory of the Bloc in their absence weakened their position to a certain extent and they would now have to decide whether or not they could successfully face a confrontation with Lacroix. As far as the internal difficulties of the party were concerned, the by-elections of Stanstead and Cartier produced no solutions, only a temporary

pause in the conflict.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER II

¹Robert Rumilly, Histoire de la Province de Québec, XL, 57.

²The by-election in Charlevoix-Saguenay was held to replace P.-F. Casgrain, who had been appointed a judge, and in Outremont to replace Thomas Vien who had been named to the Senate.

³Le Devoir, November 12, 1942, p. 3.

⁴The candidates in Charlevoix-Saguenay were Frederic Dorion, Independent; Mme Thérèse Casgrain, Independent Liberal; Boivin, Independent Liberal; Lacroix, Independent Liberal; and Gaudreau, Independent. Dorion won the election by 3,067 votes over his nearest rival, Mme Casgrain. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1944, p. 480.

⁵Le Devoir, November 12, 1942, p. 3.

⁶Le Devoir, November 13, 1942, p. 3.

⁷Le Devoir, November 30, 1942, p. 10.

⁸Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 90.

⁹Le Devoir, November 21, 1942, p. 3.

¹⁰Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 95. The objective of the Ligue meetings was to encourage the celebration of the anniversary of the Statute of Westminster as a national holiday. At one such gathering, René Chaloult suggested that it was really a more significant occasion for Canadians to remember than was Confederation. Le Devoir, December 14, 1942, p. 8.

¹¹Dr. Gauthier resigned his commission on becoming a member of the Bloc Populaire.

¹²PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 80, copy of a speech by Dr. Philippe Hamel, November 3, 1943.

¹³I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Edouard Lacroix, Edouard Lacroix to Maxime Raymond, November 21, 1942.

¹⁴Ibid.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 80, copy of a speech by Dr. Philippe Hamel, November 3, 1943.

¹⁹PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Maxime Raymond, December 10, 1942.

²⁰PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, November 30, 1942.

²¹Ibid.

²²PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Paul Gouin to Philippe Hamel, December 2, 1942.

²³PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, December 3, 1942.

²⁴PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Edouard Lacroix to Philippe Hamel, December 2, 1942.

²⁵PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Maxime Raymond, December 10, 1942.

²⁶Ibid. Hamel clearly indicated to Raymond his opinion of Lacroix, referring to him as "un brouillon plein de piastres, un matamore comme E.L. ..."

²⁷Ibid. According to Hamel, Lacroix was intriguing in René Chaloult's constituency of Lotbinière, and was predicting that Chaloult would not be the Bloc candidate there.

²⁸PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, December 11, 1942.

²⁹PAC, ibid., Vol. 2, René Chaloult to Paul Gouin, December 16, 1942. The suggestion was outlined to Hamel by René Chaloult. Paul Gouin first proposed it to Raymond.

³⁰PAC, ibid., Vol. 2, Paul Gouin to René Chaloult, December 19, 1942.

³¹PAC, ibid., Vol. 2, Paul Gouin to René Chaloult, December 29, 1942.

³²I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, "Procès-verbal, réunion du 10 janvier."

³³Ibid. The "conseil suprême" was established to aid the leader in maintaining unity of doctrine, and would be appointed by the leader himself from a choice of experts in various fields. Regional committees for the districts of Montreal and Quebec City were also proposed to assist the leader and organizers. Suggested members for the committee at Quebec City were Marie-Louis Beaulieu, René Chaloult, E.-A. Charland, Pierre Gauthier, Philippe Hamel, Edouard Lacroix, Pierre Letarte, L.-P. Morin, and Horace Philippon. It should be noted that both Morin and Philippon by this time have apparently overcome their hesitation and joined the Bloc.

³⁴Viau was a former Liberal organizer with considerable campaign experience. He had participated in the 1925 and 1926 federal elections as the organizer at Arvida, and in 1930 in Chicoutimi for J.-E.-A. Dubuc. He had occupied the position of secretary of the Liberal Association of Chicoutimi from 1929 to 1930, and, on the request of the Liberal party, had acted as the lieutenant of the Liberal organizer in Montreal in 1931. I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglia: Correspondance, A. Viau to Maxime Raymond, December 3, 1942.

³⁵I.H., Ibid., "Procès-verbal, réunion du 10 janvier."

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷I.H., ibid., Hamel (Dr. Philippe), Philippe Hamel to Maxime Raymond, January 17, 1943. The trio were also looking for a means to finance the Quebec district. To Gouin Hamel wrote, "Je cherche un mécène qui se séparera généreusement d'une somme de dix mille dollars. C'est là la solution aux présentes difficultés." PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, January 17, 1943.

³⁸I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Hamel (Dr. Philippe), Philippe Hamel to Maxime Raymond, January 17, 1943.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Le Devoir, December 30, 1942, p. 2.

⁴¹Le Devoir, January 14, 1943, p. 3.

⁴²Le Devoir, January 28, 1943, p. 6.

⁴³I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Lacroix (Edouard) de Quebec, Edouard Lacroix to Maxime Raymond, January 25, 1942. Lacroix also reviewed his past quarrels with the three nationalists. Gouin, he claimed, had abandoned them in 1935, saying that "son temps n'était pas venu." Hamel and Chaloult, he accused, had betrayed them for Duplessis. They had also accepted \$5000 from an electricity trust to oppose Lacroix in the Beauce,

causing him to lose to Duplessis in 1937.

⁴⁴Le Devoir, January 28, 1943, p. 6.

⁴⁵Ibid. Also in I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Bourassa (Henri), Henri Bourassa to Maxime Raymond, January 20, 1943.

⁴⁶Le Devoir, January 28, 1943, p. 6.

⁴⁷Ibid. René Chaloult's speech contained a reference similar to the dialectic of the 1970's: "Nous sommes les descendants des Français, race fière s'il en fut jamais une, et nous n'accepterons pas le traitement qu'on donne aux nègres."

⁴⁸In a letter to Hamel, Gouin remarked bitterly: "Par suite de cet état de choses et par suite aussi de certaines difficultés que nous avons à Montréal, j'ai décidé de faire comme vous et de limiter mes activités uniquement à ce que l'on semble attendre de nous: des discours!" PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 8, Paul Gouin to Philippe Hamel, February 3, 1943.

⁴⁹Le Devoir, February 12, 1943, p. 7.

⁵⁰According to Robert Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 112, "La campagne du Bloc Populaire est l'élément politique le plus saillant dans la province de Québec."

⁵¹Ibid., p. 69.

⁵²PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol 9, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, October 7, 1942.

⁵³Ibid.

⁵⁴Le Devoir, December 30, 1942, p. 2. Pierre Letarte had occupied the position of "procureur de la Régie provinciale des alcools" in the Duplessis administration.

⁵⁵Le Devoir, December 13, 1942, p. 3.

⁵⁶Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 75.

⁵⁷I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Jean Drapeau, Jean Drapeau to Maxime Raymond, May 30, 1947. In Drapeau's words: "A la fondation du Bloc, il fut proclamé que ce mouvement porterait son action dans les domaines provincial et fédéral. Ce fut, en ce temps-là, contre la préférence de plusieurs qui se seraient ralliés au Bloc, à la condition qu'il se limite au fédéral."

⁵⁸Le Devoir, November 2, 1942, p. 9.

⁵⁹Le Devoir, January 11, 1943, p. 2.

⁶⁰Le Devoir, January 19, 1943, p. 1.

⁶¹Le Devoir, December 18, 1942, p. 3.

⁶²Le Devoir, February 17, 1943, p. 2.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Le Devoir, February 22, 1943, p. 10.

⁶⁵Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 130.

⁶⁶PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 2, René Chaloult to Paul Gouin, December 21, 1942.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Le Devoir, February 18, 1943, p. 3.

⁶⁹Le Devoir, February 25, 1943, p. 3.

⁷⁰Le Devoir, February 22, 1943, p. 7.

⁷¹Le Devoir, March 1, 1943, p. 6.

⁷²PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 8, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, March 1, 1943.

⁷³PAC, ibid., Vol. 8, Paul Gouin to Philippe Hamel, March 8, 1943.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Other Bloc participants were André Laurendeau, Pierre Gauthier, Pierre Letarte, and Philippe Girard. According to Philippe Hamel, these meetings were held against the wishes of Lacroix, but "c'est monsieur Girard de Montréal qui lui a forcé la main." I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Philippe Hamel, Philippe Hamel to Abbé Groulx, June 14, 1943. René Chaloult claimed that his participation and that of Dr. Hamel had been completely at their own expense. I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Chaloult (René), René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, September 22, 1943.

⁷⁷Le Devoir, March 15, 1943, p. 2.

⁷⁸Le Devoir, March 23, 1943, p. 3.

⁷⁹Le Devoir, March 1, 1943, p. 3.

⁸⁰Le Devoir, April 12, 1943, p. 2. According to René Chaloult, these rallies were again held against Lacroix's wishes, who later wanted to participate in view of their anticipated success. Chaloult stated that the rallies were organized and, in part, financed by Dr. Hamel. I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Chaloult (René), September 22, 1943.

⁸¹PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 1, M.-L. Beaulieu to Paul Gouin, April 7, 1943.

⁸²This was the interpretation of Beaulieu: "le programme devait être pour lui [Gouin] l'occasion de sortir Lacroix." I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Beaulieu (Marie-Louis), M.-L. Beaulieu to Maxime Raymond, September 20, 1943.

⁸³I.H., ibid., Adhésions - Re: Election provinciale, "Procès-verbal d'un caucus du Bloc Populaire Canadien, tenu à Montréal à l'Hotel Queen's, le premier mai."

⁸⁴Ibid.

⁸⁵I.H., ibid., Chaloult (René), René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, September 22, 1943.

⁸⁶I.H., ibid., Chaloult (Me René), René Chaloult to Pierre Gauthier, May 10, 1943. Their activity was resumed at a rally at St. Hyacinthe on 24 May with Dr. Pierre Gauthier and Philippe Girard. Le Devoir, May 25, 1943, p. 2.

⁸⁷I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Chaloult (Me René), René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, September 22, 1943.

⁸⁸Although several Bloc Populaire members met the day before, 31 May, at Trois Rivières, there is no indication that the document was discussed or drawn up at that time. According to a report in Le Devoir, Paul Gouin, René Chaloult, Dr. Philippe Hamel, Philippe Girard, Victor Trépanier and several others met in Trois Rivières that day. A statement from Chaloult gave as an explanation of the meeting simply a half-way meeting to discuss problems of the party, and claimed that no important decisions had been made. Le Devoir, June 1, 1943, p. 3.

⁸⁹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Lettres au sujet de l'imbroglie, Document dated June 1, 1943. Typed at the bottom of the page is the comment that the document is of value only if signed by Paul Gouin, Jean Martineau, André Laurendeau, and Philippe Girard.

⁹⁰A letter from René Chaloult to Paul Gouin mentions sending to Gouin a document "dûment signé par le docteur Philippe Hamel, messieurs Marie-Louis Beaulieu, Pierre Letarte,

Victor Trépanier, and himself. He concludes, "Il nous semble très important que vous le fassiez signer au plus tôt par le plus grand nombre de directeurs possible à Montréal. Vous pourrez alors le déposer entre les mains du secrétaire général du Bloc. La publication dans les journaux d'un communiqué officiel ne devrait pas tarder." PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 2, René Chaloult to Paul Gouin, June 1, 1943.

⁹¹Le Devoir, June 14, 1943, p. 7.

⁹²Le Devoir, June 15, 1943, p. 3.

⁹³I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Philippe Hamel, Philippe Hamel to Abbé Lionel Groulx, June 14, 1943.

⁹⁴I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Chaloult (René), René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, June 21, 1943.

⁹⁵I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Philippe Hamel, Philippe Hamel to Abbé Lionel Groulx, June 28, 1943.

⁹⁶I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglío: Correspondance, Philippe Hamel to Maxime Raymond, February 1, 1945.

⁹⁷Ibid.

⁹⁸I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Victor Trépanier, Abbé Lionel Groulx to Victor Trépanier, July 27, 1943.

⁹⁹I.H., ibid., Philippe Hamel, Philippe Hamel to Abbé Lionel Groulx, June 28, 1943.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 2, René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, July 29, 1943.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³PAC, ibid., Vol 81, Victor Trépanier to Maxime Raymond, July 22, 1943.

¹⁰⁴Ibid.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Victor Trépanier, Abbé Lionel Groulx to Victor Trépanier, July 27, 1943.

¹⁰⁷Ibid. According to Groulx, Raymond could not abdicate the leadership of the Bloc "sans perdre l'appui du Devoir --

l'entente entre MM. Pelletier et Raymond est très catégorique là-dessus. Et le chef du Bloc n'eût pas accepté de lancer ce mouvement politique et il ne continuerait pas de le diriger sans l'appui d'un quotidien, en l'espèce le Devoir."

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Victor Trépanier, Victor Trépanier to Abbé Lionel Groulx, August 16, 1943.

¹¹²These were the assemblies referred to by Hamel as the "véritables échecs pour le mouvement." I.H., ibid., Philippe Hamel, Philippe Hamel to Abbé Lionel Groulx, June 14, 1943. He also claimed that they had often an attendance of only fifty to sixty people in auditoriums capable of holding fifteen hundred. I.H., ibid., Philippe Hamel, Philippe Hamel to Abbé Lionel Groulx, June 28, 1943.

¹¹³Since the decision against revision would leave the western provinces and Ontario with a greater representation than that to which they were entitled, the Bloc populaire interpreted the decision as another attempt to curb the influence of Quebec. Le Devoir, July 6, 1943, p. 7.

¹¹⁴André Laurendeau, La Crise de la Conscription, 1942 (Montreal: Editions du Jour, 1962), p. 142.

¹¹⁵Ibid., p. 143.

¹¹⁶Le Devoir, June 17, 1943, p. 1.

¹¹⁷Ibid.

¹¹⁸Rumilly, op. cit., XL, 213.

¹¹⁹Laurendeau, op. cit., p. 142.

¹²⁰Le Devoir, July 8, 1943, p. 2.

¹²¹Ibid.

¹²²Le Devoir, July 9, 1943, p. 3.

¹²³Ibid.

¹²⁴Le Devoir, July 12, 1943, p. 6.

¹²⁵Le Devoir, July 13, 1943, p. 2.

¹²⁶Le Devoir, July 19, 1943, p. 2.

¹²⁷Le Devoir, July 19, 1943, p. 7.

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Le Devoir, August 2, 1943, p. 3.

¹³⁰Ibid. The campaign of Martin had been conducted primarily by Jean-François Pouliot, and at times its main target seemed to be the Bloc Populaire rather than the Liberals. Pouliot presented several attacks on the Bloc Populaire and also on Le Devoir, which had criticized the candidacy of Martin for dividing the French Canadian vote. Ibid., p. 6 and p. 7.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Le Devoir, July 26, 1943, p. 3.

¹³³Le Devoir, July 26, 1943, p. 4.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Le Devoir, August 6, 1943, p. 4.

¹³⁶Le Devoir, August 4, 1943, p. 3.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Le Devoir, July 29, 1943, p. 2.

¹³⁹I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Philippe Hamel, Abbé Lionel Groulx to Philippe Hamel, July 25, 1943.

¹⁴⁰Girard's enthusiasm at one point caused a small disturbance in Magog. A group of Liberals were holding a private meeting for all young women at the home of a M. and Mme Roy, and Philippe Girard and several other Bloc members dropped by. According to Girard they entered the house at the invitation of the hosts and began to challenge J. Fontaine, the Liberal member of Parliament for Mégantic-Frontenac, who was in charge of the meeting. However, the police were called at the request of a Liberal organizer and arrived at the house. While Mme Roy said she had no objection to the Bloc group staying as long as they did not cause trouble, they decided that perhaps all should leave. By that time a crowd had gathered outside the house and the impression was created that the Bloc members had been ejected from the house. When the story first appeared in the newspapers, it appeared that Girard and his associates had "crashed" the Liberal meeting and caused a disturbance which had resulted in the calling of the police. However,

Le Devoir printed the story according to the above interpretation. Le Devoir, August 3, 1943, p. 7.

¹⁴¹Le Devoir, July 23, 1943, p. 4. Speech by Fernand Chaussé.

¹⁴²Le Devoir, July 27, 1943, p. 6. Speech by Emile Simard.

¹⁴³Le Devoir, July 30, 1943, p. 7. Speech by Jean-Louis Dorais.

¹⁴⁴Le Devoir, August 3, 1943, p. 6. Speech by Jean Drapeau.

¹⁴⁵Le Devoir, August 2, 1943, p. 3.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Le Devoir, August 7, 1943, p. 3.

¹⁴⁹Le Devoir, August 9, 1943, p. 3.

¹⁵⁰Ibid.

¹⁵¹Le Devoir, July 22, 1943, p. 3.

¹⁵²Laurendeau, op. cit., p. 143.

¹⁵³Le Devoir, July 28, 1943, p. 2.

¹⁵⁴Ibid.

¹⁵⁵Ibid.

¹⁵⁶Ibid.

¹⁵⁷Ibid.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹Le Devoir, July 30, 1943, p. 2.

¹⁶⁰Ibid.

¹⁶¹Le Devoir, August 6, 1943, p. 7.

¹⁶²Ibid.

¹⁶³Le Devoir, July 28, 1943, p. 10.

¹⁶⁴While Mason Wade credits Fred Rose with an eighteen hundred majority over Paul Massé, Wade, op. cit., p. 967, the Canadian Parliamentary Guide for 1944 gives Rose only 150 votes more than Massé. Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1944, p. 502.

CHAPTER III

L'IMBROGLIO

The victory in Stanstead in August 1943 was a significant factor in the consolidation of the forces of the Bloc Populaire. However, it provided no solution to the internal conflicts which persisted within the party. While negotiations continued over the next six months between the trio and Maxime Raymond, each side became more firmly entrenched behind its own position. A declaration from Maxime Raymond on the question at the end of November left the trio little choice but to either leave the party or continue their membership on Raymond's terms. However, no definite action was taken by the trio until after the Bloc convention in February 1944. Bitter over what they felt was their exclusion from the convention and angered by the explanation of the conflict offered at the convention by the party leadership, the trio in mid-February brought the debate before the public. The resulting accusations and counter-accusations resulted in a definite break between the trio and Raymond. Although the public discussion of the Bloc's family quarrel no doubt weakened the Bloc Populaire, the party emerged from its February convention united behind the leadership of Raymond and optimistic about their chances of success

in the provincial election expected in the summer of 1944.

The new confidence acquired by the Bloc Populaire as a result of the Stanstead victory was evident in its activities during the fall of 1943. It clearly indicated its determination to continue its move to win the support of the province at a mass rally on 12 August in the Montreal constituency of Cartier, where Bloc candidate Paul Massé had run second to Fred Rose. That evening a large crowd cheered the new federal member for Stanstead, Armand Choquette, and enthusiastically applauded Paul Massé's denunciation of Rose's victory in Cartier.¹ The rally was only the first of many sponsored by the Bloc Populaire that fall in its bid for support in Quebec.

The Bloc Populaire's new confidence was also evident in its repeated rejection of any suggestion that it should limit the scope of its campaign and choose either federal or provincial politics as its target. After the by-election, rumours again circulated that the Bloc and the Union Nationale had reached an agreement by which the Bloc would limit its activities to the federal field, leaving the provincial arena to Duplessis' forces. Repeated denials of such rumours by André Laurendeau² were followed on 4 September by a party statement declaring that the Bloc would continue to campaign both federally and provincially.³ There had never been any question of an entente with the Union Nationale, it emphatically stated. As the rumours persisted, Maxime Raymond himself declared on 10 September that the Bloc Populaire had reached

no agreement with any other group and that,

... le mouvement provincial et le mouvement fédéral du Bloc restent indissolublement liés sous une même autorité.⁴

This did not prevent many nationalists from arguing that the Union Nationale already represented the nationalist voice in provincial politics and that the Bloc's presence provincially would merely divide the nationalist vote. It would appear that Henri Bourassa for one supported this view at that time. Commenting on the political situation in a letter, Bourassa showed concern over the lack of co-operation between Maxime Raymond and Maurice Duplessis. While he wrote that he considered Raymond the most outstanding of the politicians in Quebec, he nevertheless advised his correspondent to vote provincially for the Union Nationale while federally supporting the Bloc.⁵ As the advice offered by Bourassa in this letter apparently became fairly widely known, it no doubt caused some embarrassment to the party.⁶

Encouraged by the Stanstead victory, the Bloc continued to broaden its campaign in the province. The Bloc Populaire continued to sponsor meetings each week in various centers in the province. While a large number of Bloc members participated, the two teams of Edouard Lacroix-Pierre Gauthier, and André Laurendeau-Philippe Girard assumed the responsibility for a large share of the speaking commitments. One of the first Bloc constituency organizations was formed at Saint Hyacinthe in mid-September⁷ and on 5 October the Bloc held its first

meeting outside of the province of Quebec at Hawkesbury, Ontario.⁸ In addition to its weekly meetings the Bloc also spent four days in the Lac Saint-Jean region in October,⁹ and in November conducted a series of seventeen meetings in the Temiscamingue and Abitibi areas.¹⁰ The radio also continued to play an important role in the Bloc's publicity campaign. André Laurendeau's weekly news commentaries were discontinued in September, but the Bloc continued to sponsor a weekly broadcast Saturday evenings in Quebec City and Sunday evenings in Montreal.

While reports in Le Devoir of Bloc activities indicate considerable progress, some dissatisfaction still existed within the party over the course which it was following. Marie-Louis Beaulieu wrote Raymond from Quebec City in September complaining of what he felt were poor results of recent organizational trips to Trois-Rivières and Grand-Mère.¹¹ Beaulieu added that he felt that trips to other areas were probably equally ineffectual. While the meetings attracted publicity, he explained, they did not succeed in creating local organization and leadership. Since the Bloc was a new party limited in funds, Beaulieu felt that it was essential that it concentrate on building a nucleus of workers in each center. Not only was this not happening, he wrote Raymond, but neither Pierre Gauthier, the organizer for the Quebec district, nor Edouard Lacroix showed any concern over it.

Of particular significance to the Bloc Populaire was the presentation in October of a specific platform for the

party. During a series of three radio broadcasts Maxime Raymond outlined the main tenets of the Bloc Populaire platform in areas of both federal and provincial concern. The platform presented by Raymond at this time followed the general principles which he had sketched a year earlier when the Bloc was founded, but which had since been discussed and completed by the party.¹² While the definite points discussed by Raymond will be dealt with below in chapter four, it should be noted that, although cursory in some aspects, the platform was generally comprehensive and clearly indicated those measures supported by the party. With its platform clearly defined the Bloc was even more prepared to face either a federal or a provincial general election, and election rumours certainly increased as the weeks went by.¹³ But equally as important as strengthening the position of the Bloc Populaire before the electors, the promulgation of a specific platform for the party would hopefully satisfy those of its members who demanded a written platform. Neither Paul Gouin nor Dr. Philippe Hamel could now complain that the Bloc was not committed to specific proposals for legislative action. However, whether or not they would completely accept the platform as outlined by Raymond would remain to be seen.

Once the by-election was over, the trio once again faced the dilemma posed by their relationship to the Bloc. The trio, in refusing to participate in the Bloc's campaign, had indicated to Chanoine Groulx that they would feel obliged, once the elections were over, to publicly explain the reasons

for their absence.¹⁴ Groulx strongly advised against such action. Raymond, he predicted, would interpret such a manoeuvre as a personal attack and Raymond's reply would be in his own defence and not in the defence of Lacroix. In Groulx's opinion Raymond entertained no illusions about Lacroix, but was determined to reconcile the two factions. Laurendeau, he continued, would support Raymond:

Rien ne pourra l'amener à se faire l'apologiste du député de la Beauce, mais il défendra le mouvement et son chef.¹⁵

In an effort to resolve their differences René Chaloult met with Maxime Raymond at Woodlands on Saturday, 21 August. Independent accounts of their interview by both Chaloult and Raymond indicate an almost complete lack of mutual trust. Raymond's feelings are revealed in a memorandum he wrote summarizing the discussion which took place.¹⁶ According to Raymond, Chaloult informed Raymond that the Bloc had really been the party of Gouin, Hamel, and himself, and that in asking Raymond to become leader, they had only considered him a figure-head. In Raymond's words, he had been intended as "un paravent et un bailleur de fonds."¹⁷ In fact, Chaloult indicated that the trio had been surprised to see Raymond assume so active a role in the affairs of the party. To this revelation, Raymond wrote, he had objected that he had accepted the leadership on the explicit understanding that the Bloc would be a completely new party with only one leader.

Raymond and Chaloult also discussed the basis on which Chaloult would resume his activities with the Bloc. While

Raymond's account mentions the still unresolved question of the assistant organizer in the district of Quebec,¹⁸ written conditions submitted by Chaloult to Raymond two days later included three conditions. Firstly, Chaloult requested a guarantee that the slander against his family and all intrigues against him in his constituency (apparently provoked by the Bloc or by Lacroix) would stop.¹⁹ Secondly, he wanted assurances that he enjoyed the "confiance réelle et publique" of the party leader. Lastly, he insisted on the end of the control of the Quebec district by one Bloc member (again apparently Lacroix). In order to ensure the realization of this last condition, Chaloult added that it was absolutely necessary that the Quebec district be financed directly by the Montreal treasury and that all contributions be directed into a common fund.²⁰

At the end of the interview no agreement of any kind had been reached between Chaloult and Raymond. Raymond had asked Chaloult to submit in writing the conditions which would bring him back into the party and this Chaloult did. To Chaloult it had been "une entrevue inutile et décevante."²¹ He left it completely convinced that Edouard Lacroix controlled the Bloc through his money:

Monsieur R [aymond] me donne nettement l'impression qu'il serait prêt au besoin à sacrifier tous les membres du Bloc pour conserver Lacroix.²²

He wrote Chanoine Groulx that he saw little hope of a settlement.

Any hope of a settlement between Chaloult and Raymond

at that time certainly disappeared a week later when Raymond learned that Chaloult planned to make a radio speech on 12 September. Raymond apparently interpreted Chaloult's intention of presenting this speech, announced as "le Bloc Populaire Canadien au provincial," as a sign of bad faith and insubordination. He perhaps also feared that Chaloult was about to make public his quarrels with the Bloc. In any event, Raymond wrote Chaloult on 29 August explaining that, after learning of Chaloult's proposed speech, he had decided to discard a reply to Chaloult which he had already composed and which Raymond felt would have made collaboration possible.²³ Raymond added that he was now convinced that co-operation between them was impossible and that Chaloult was concerned only about his own importance in the Bloc. However, Raymond declared, as long as he was leader of the Bloc, the party would not be used to satisfy one person's ambitions.

Chaloult replied two days later on 31 August, rejecting with indignation Raymond's assertions.²⁴ After having represented the Bloc in the Legislative Assembly for four months, Chaloult replied, he felt completely entitled to speak on the proposed topic. He also denied any desire to be underhanded or show hostility towards the party. He felt that his past service in the nationalist cause clearly indicated his lack of personal ambition and entitled him to express his own opinion:

Nous n'avons pas combattu l'esprit de parti pour le faire renaître sous une forme nouvelle. Nous n'avons pas dénoncé

le servilisme politique pour le pratiquer dans le Bloc. La discipline ne signifie pas une soumission aveugle et béate.²⁵

Chaloult concluded that Raymond was only using the incident as a pretext to break off negotiations between them. On 10 September Raymond replied to Chaloult, indicating that he considered the discussion closed.²⁶ He had neither the time nor the inclination for useless discussions, he wrote. He added that he still retained bitter memories of what had happened during his illness, "car je supportais les frais d'une organisation dispendieuse à Montréal, qu'on a paralysée, pour la faire s'occuper des chicanes personnelles du district du Québec."²⁷

The much-debated speech by Chaloult on 12 September contained no attacks on the Bloc Populaire. However, it did make quite clear that Chaloult strongly believed that the Bloc should concentrate on provincial rather than federal issues.²⁸ Under normal circumstances, he argued, it was at Quebec City that the future of French Canadians would be determined, since it was the provincial government which was legislatively responsible for matters pertaining to education, civil rights, health, and agriculture. While it was fine to make eloquent demands for a flag, a national anthem, and equal representation in the civil service, he considered it more important to obtain the necessities of life:

Je veux bien de la monnaie bilingue dans la poche des autres, mais je préférerais de la monnaie unilingue dans la poche de mes compatriotes. Il me paraît plus important de sortir de notre misère que de la refranciser.²⁹

Chaloult proposed nationalization of the "trusts" as the quickest method to realize economic reform. Included in the enterprizes which he felt should be nationalized were the production of electricity, the provision of gasoline and telephone services, and the production and processing of certain natural resources. These measures should be fundamental to the platform of the Bloc, he added. Equally as important as the platform, Chaloult continued, were those who would be responsible for its implementation, for such measures would be introduced only if the key members of the party sincerely believed in them. Chaloult even named the "vedettes" of the Bloc Populaire who he felt deserved the trust of the people: Maxime Raymond, Philippe Hamel, Paul Gouin, André Laurendeau, Jean Martineau, Marie-Louis Beaulieu, Joseph Blain, Fernand Chaussé, Philippe Girard, and Philippe Ferland. While not naming Edouard Lacroix directly, Chaloult warned his listeners against expecting radical economic reform from anyone closely associated with the present economic system, no matter how nationalist such a person might claim to be. Even worse,

... s'il arrivait que ce mouvement politique --Dieu le garde d'un tel malheur! --fût généreusement financé par ce même magnat, peut-être intéressé dans d'autres industries essentielles, auriez-vous la naïveté d'y voir un gage des grandes réformes que vous attendez depuis si longtemps?³⁰

Philippe Hamel was extremely pleased with the reaction to Chaloult's speech in the Quebec City district and prepared a speech of his own, which he delivered over the radio the evening of 17 October. While he had at first intended to explain completely the reasons for the trio's inactivity over the past

months, he apparently altered his text at the last minute at the request of friends who still hoped for a settlement of the differences within the party.³¹ As had Chaloult, Hamel emphasized the need for social and economic reform within the province. No mention was made of questions of federal concern, nor of the Bloc's strong opposition to conscription. While he reaffirmed his complete faith in the leadership of Maxime Raymond, referring to Raymond as "un homme très estimable et d'une grande intégrité",³² Hamel expressed reservations about certain developments within the party, particularly during Raymond's illness. During that time, he explained, he, Gouin, and Chaloult had found themselves under the authority of a politician whom they did not trust. Since this situation still existed, they had decided to abstain from further participation in the Bloc rather than risk the defeat of their ideas from within the party once electoral victory was assured. While Dr. Hamel did not name this person, he did speak of "un gros brasseur d'affaires" and concluded:

Lutter contre des ennemis de l'extérieur, soit, mais tolérer des adversaires roués et pleins d'animosités, à l'intérieur, jamais!³³

It was inevitable that the speeches by Hamel and Chaloult would eventually prompt comment. Dr. Hamel's speech was reported in Le Devoir on Monday, 19 October. The following day an unsigned article appeared in the same newspaper offering an explanation for Chaloult and Hamel's inactivity in the Bloc since the previous April.³⁴ The article treated the problem in the Bloc as a personality clash between

Dr. Hamel, on the one hand, and Edouard Lacroix on the other, resulting from hard feelings which dated back to the by-election in La Beauce in 1937.³⁵ While the article mentioned that Paul Gouin supported his friends in the matter, it minimized Gouin's involvement by remarking that he was far less hostile than Hamel or Chaloult. In reviewing the development of the conflict within the Bloc the article presented several statements which were inaccurate and was generally unsympathetic to Hamel and Chaloult. The article implied that both Hamel and Chaloult had hesitated about joining the party when it was formed, whereas, in fact, Chaloult had been among the first to declare his membership in the party. The article also incorrectly stated that Lacroix immediately and firmly announced his membership and became, from the beginning, the party organizer for the Quebec district.³⁶ Reference was also made to Chaloult's and Hamel's refusal to participate in the Stanstead by-election in spite of a specific invitation to join the campaign, whereas Lacroix had campaigned for the party in Stanstead, "où il fût l'un des artisans de la victoire."³⁷ Those circumstances apparently increased the animosity of René Chaloult and Dr. Hamel towards Lacroix and had resulted in the unpleasant remarks which they had recently made about Lacroix during radio broadcasts. This article would indicate that Le Devoir firmly supported the position of Maxime Raymond on the issue, an impression confirmed by a letter by Georges Pelletier to Maxime Raymond. Commenting on the controversy over Chaloult's

speech Pelletier wrote:

Je crois, pour ma part, que l'histoire va tomber à plat.
... M. Chaloult et ses amis se sont mis hors du mouvement,
pourquoi cherchent-ils à y retourner?³⁸

The content of the Devoir article prompted the first public statement on the conflict in the Bloc from Paul Gouin. In a statement in Le Devoir on 21 October, Gouin stated that the article was not only unfair to Dr. Hamel and René Chaloult, but it was also "absolutely contrary to fact."³⁹ Hamel responded to the article by urging to Paul Gouin that it was time to make a stand and completely explain the issue to the public.⁴⁰ He added that, after seeing the article, he retained little hope of a settlement.

It was not long before Edouard Lacroix joined the public debate. Speaking at a Bloc Populaire meeting at Pont Rouge on 31 October, he challenged Dr. Hamel to name the person to whom he had referred as "le trustard" and if it were Lacroix, to produce the evidence in support of his assertion.⁴¹ A brief but bitter public exchange between Hamel and Lacroix followed, with Dr. Hamel accusing Lacroix of hindering the efforts of the Bloc, and Lacroix in turn defending himself against any complicity with the trusts. It was a debate which became increasingly personal and hostile,⁴² and accomplished little except to attract unfavourable publicity for the party.

In view of these developments it was not surprising that Maxime Raymond finally broke his silence on the conflict. His public statement of 30 November left no doubt as to his position.

While he explained that he had always tried to remain aloof of personal quarrels among Bloc members, he emphasized that he could not let his position as leader be publicly questioned:

Je ne puis accepter, chacun le comprendra, que le public se prenne à me croire malhonnête pour garder comme collaborateurs des saboteurs du mouvement, ou me croire d'un jugement assez peu avisé pour faire le jeu des arrivistes ou des traîtres.⁴³

He had announced a platform for the party, he continued, and this platform should be sufficient guarantee of his intentions.

The solution to the conflict offered by Raymond was harsh:

Que ceux qui ont mis en doute publiquement ma sagacité sinon ma sincérité, rentrent dignement dans le rang s'ils ne veulent pas être considérés comme des adversaires du Bloc.⁴⁴

In view of the firm resolve of the trio not to continue with the Bloc under existing circumstances Raymond's statement left little room for negotiation. On Sunday, 5 December they consulted several of their supporters in Quebec City. Following the meeting both Dr. Hamel and Paul Gouin indicated to the press that they would shortly issue public statements defining their positions.⁴⁵ That same Sunday in Montreal Maxime Raymond presided at a meeting of Bloc members representing various counties throughout the province.⁴⁶ The meeting, attended by three hundred and fifty Bloc members, had been called with only two days' notice and its prime purpose was apparently to bring the conflict between Lacroix and the trio before the party members. Raymond, making his first appearance as leader since his illness, spoke to the meeting for about three quarters of an hour, and then answered questions put forward by the delegates.

There is no indication of the explanation offered by Raymond at this time,⁴⁷ but he apparently received the full support of the delegates present. According to Le Devoir's account,

A la fin de la réunion, les délégués ont à l'unanimité renouvelé leur confiance absolu dans le chef, M. Raymond et dans le programme qu'il a récemment exposé à la radio.⁴⁸

Public debate about the imbroglio now subsided. André Laurendeau made only passing comment to the situation when he resumed his weekly political commentaries on 12 December. Endorsing Raymond's statement of 30 November, Laurendeau declared that no one person could be more important than the party, and that public discussion should give way to efforts to realize the goals of the movement.⁴⁹

While remaining silent publicly, the trio again initiated steps in December to reach a settlement of their differences with the Bloc Populaire. As they had done almost a year ago, the trio again attempted to convince Raymond to shift the party's organization to accommodate the two opposing elements. However, this time the reorganization would be effected through the establishment within the Bloc of federal and provincial sections. Both sections would remain under the general leadership of Maxime Raymond, although he would chose one area in which he would remain personally active. A leader for the other section would then be chosen. The proposal called for a unified organization in the Montreal district, with no distinction between the provincial and federal sections, as there were essentially no conflicts in that district. However, in the Quebec district,

distinct federal and provincial organizations, each with its own headquarters, would be created at the district level. This distinction would disappear at the constituency level with members free to opt for that aspect, either federal or provincial, in which they were most interested.⁵⁰

The role of mediator between the trio and the Bloc Populaire was assumed by Philippe Ferland, a former associate of Paul Gouin in l'Action Libérale Nationale. According to Ferland his first step was to expose the proposal to several members whom he considered influential with Maxime Raymond.⁵¹ During contacts made in mid-December, those he consulted indicated to Ferland a desire to see a settlement reached although many felt that the simplest way to do it would simply be for the trio to comply with Raymond's declaration of 30 November. To this Ferland reported that he objected "qu'on ne pouvait traiter les piliers du nationalisme en enfants d'école,"⁵² nor, he added, would Gouin, Hamel, or Lacroix consent to work within the same organization as Edouard Lacroix. According to Ferland, the result of these preliminary contacts was encouraging, as those he consulted finally agreed that some other solution was necessary and accepted the idea of dividing the Bloc into federal and provincial sections. Among those members specifically mentioned by Ferland as having approved the proposal were Dr. J.-B. Prince, Paul Massé, and Jean Martineau.⁵³

Ferland next approached André Laurendeau and outlined his proposal in detail in hope that Laurendeau would agree to

go with Ferland to meet with Raymond. In urging the creation of two sections within the party, Ferland argued that not only did Raymond's poor health limit his activities, but it was also legally impossible for Raymond to represent the Bloc both in the House of Commons and in the Quebec Legislative Assembly at the same time. In view of Raymond's past experience, he suggested that it would be reasonable for Raymond to restrict himself to the federal scene: "il y est, la lutte est beaucoup plus facile, moins coûteuse."⁵⁴ Not only that, Raymond easily agreed with Edouard Lacroix.⁵⁵ On the other hand, those Bloc members more interested in provincial politics would group within the provincial wing of the Bloc Populaire, and a leader would be chosen to head the provincial section.⁵⁶

At the conclusion of their discussion, André Laurendeau agreed to act as Ferland's spokesman to Maxime Raymond. Laurendeau subsequently arranged a meeting with Raymond during which he outlined Ferland's proposal.⁵⁷ Raymond's reaction to the idea is not clear. André Laurendeau simply reported to Philippe Ferland that "il avait été écouté d'un air serein."⁵⁸ Dissatisfied with the results, Ferland arranged for an interview personally with Raymond. Accompanied by Jean Martineau, he met with the Bloc leader on 27 December.⁵⁹ Ferland, on behalf of himself and the trio, repeated his proposal to divide the Bloc Populaire into federal and provincial sections. Many of his arguments were those he had previously used with Laurendeau. A new argument which he put forward to Raymond added a financial

incentive to acceptance of the idea. If the trio were in charge of the provincial wing, he informed Raymond, they would contribute financially to both sections.⁶⁰ He declared that of \$50,000 at their disposal, \$10,000 would be contributed to the provincial section and \$15,000 to the federal group. This \$15,000 would be transferred to Raymond only when he accepted the proposal in question or any other solution "qui tiendrait compte des difficultés du problème."⁶¹ The topic of a provincial leader was also discussed at some length. Since André Laurendeau had indicated to Ferland that he had no interest in the position, Raymond stated that his choice would then be Paul Gouin. He did not think that the position should be occupied by either René Chaloult or Dr. Hamel. According to Ferland, they also discussed the eventuality of Raymond assuming the provincial leadership should the Bloc gain power provincially. Ferland apparently assured Raymond that under those circumstances Paul Gouin, if provincial leader, would willingly cede the leadership to Raymond.

Philippe Ferland left the meeting with Raymond with no definite acceptance or rejection of the proposal. The Bloc leader informed Ferland that he would consider the idea during his Christmas vacation at Woodlands and would give Ferland a definite reply when the former returned to Montreal on 10 January. However, Ferland did not let matters rest there. On 31 December he communicated his proposal to several of the more prominent Bloc members by means of a letter addressed collectively

to André Laurendeau, Philippe Girard, Paul Massé, Fernand Chaussé, Eugène Therrien, Charles Roy, Marcel Poulin, and Michel Chartrand.⁶² To further strengthen his position with Raymond Ferland also wrote the Bloc leader at Woodlands on 3 January 1944. In his letter he reviewed his arguments and further pressed the case for an internal division of the party.⁶³

As had been arranged, Raymond phoned Ferland on his return to Montreal on 10 January and arranged a meeting at Raymond's residence for the twelfth. The interview proved extremely disappointing for Ferland. Maxime Raymond completely rejected the proposal for the creation of federal and provincial wings of the Bloc. He maintained the same position: the problem could only be resolved if the trio would resume, with no further discussion, their former places in the party. According to Ferland, Raymond was willing to make some concessions to Paul Gouin, but not to either René Chaloult or Dr. Hamel, with whom he had found it extremely difficult to deal.⁶⁴

The trio had apparently not been optimistic about their chances for success. Gouin had written Hamel on 4 January that he doubted that a settlement could be reached. "Tous les chefs officiels et officieux sont contre nous," he wrote pessimistically.⁶⁵ Besides, Gouin added, the absence of the trio from the Bloc would leave the way clear for the Duplessistes who had infiltrated the party to conclude the alliance they desired between the Bloc Populaire and the Union Nationale. Gouin proposed two alternatives: remain silent and continue their inactive

membership in the party while waiting further developments, possibly the resignation of Raymond as leader; or expose the problem completely to the public and then either abstain from politics or become independent candidates either federally or provincially.⁶⁶ At the same time Gouin wrote the Chanoine Groulx expressing his complete discouragement over the recent events and his pessimism about the future of the nationalist cause.⁶⁷

Raymond's position had changed very little throughout these negotiations. The trio had not been successful in winning concessions from him. Insufficient documentation⁶⁸ makes it extremely difficult to interpret accurately Raymond's attitude towards the conflict between the trio and Edouard Lacroix, but some essential aspects can be discussed. It is obvious that from the beginning the trio failed to convince Raymond that Edouard Lacroix represented any threat to the integrity of the Bloc Populaire. Raymond and Lacroix had been political associates since they had both been first elected in 1925 and Raymond seems to have been anxious to secure Lacroix's collaboration when the Bloc Populaire was formed in the fall of 1942. There are also several indications that the trio's assertions that Lacroix was more than just another member were well founded. Lacroix assumed the financing of the Quebec district, which no doubt gave him considerable influence in the area. St.-Georges de Beauce in Lacroix's constituency was chosen by Raymond as the location of the Bloc's first public rally. Maxime Raymond and Edouard Lacroix were the only speakers at that rally and the

trio claimed that Lacroix had objected to their presence.⁶⁹

On the other hand Raymond had also welcomed the members of the trio into the Bloc when it was formed. When Dr. Hamel hesitated about joining, Raymond reassured the nationalist that his demands for social and economic reform would be satisfied.⁷⁰

Yet the trio repeatedly maintained that Raymond had withheld from them the knowledge that Lacroix was not only a member of the party, but that he was also providing financial support for it. Such knowledge, they claimed, would have altered their decision to support the party. As the party became active their complaints to Raymond that Lacroix was systematically blocking their efforts received little sympathy from Raymond. Nor did Raymond show any concern over the influence which Lacroix could exert through his money. Rather Raymond welcomed Lacroix's support and even argued that it was essential.⁷¹ Nor did he see any need to grant the trio's request that all money be distributed through a central party treasury rather than through each district.

Since Raymond could see no conflict between Lacroix's membership and the goals of the Bloc Populaire, he interpreted the trio's motivation as being purely personal --- dislike and resentment of Lacroix resulting from their past political associations with him.⁷² Since the issue was one of "personality" rather than "principle," Raymond maintained that as leader he should not become involved in it. He repeatedly asserted that he showed no partiality to either side. According to Abbé Groulx in August, 1943, Raymond was not showing a preference for

Lacroix over the trio, but rather wanted to reconcile both factions within the Bloc.⁷³

One of the arguments most frequently invoked by Raymond in refusing to give the trio more authority within the group or in refusing a division of the party was that the strength of the party depended upon unity of leadership. He frequently reiterated his conviction that, in order to prevent a repetition of 1936, the Bloc should remain under the direction of only one leader. In fact Raymond claimed that he had accepted the leadership of the Bloc on the condition that there be only one leader.⁷⁴ Raymond interpreted many of the actions of the trio as a challenge to his authority and leadership. He regarded their efforts in the spring of 1943 to exclude Lacroix from the party as a deliberate attempt to profit from his illness to improve their position in the party.⁷⁵ He considered their refusal to campaign in the Stanstead and Cartier by-elections unless Lacroix left the party as an ultimatum prompted by their personal ambition:

... quand on a confiance en un chef, on n'agit pas avec des ultimatums. Comme question de fait, je n'en accepterai jamais comme chef.⁷⁶

Raymond also seemed convinced that the trio's refusal to campaign was also motivated by their failure to secure the appointment of Armand Viau as assistant organizer in the district of Quebec.⁷⁷

By the fall of 1943 a considerable amount of personal resentment can be detected in Raymond's attitude towards the trio. To one Bloc supporter he pointed out that he had not

sought the leadership of the party, but that in some circles he had been sought as "un chef nominal et un bailleur de fonds."⁷⁸ He revealed this same feeling in his interview with René Chaloult at the end of August 1943. He also retained bitter memories of what had happened during his illness, he wrote Chaloult in September, for,

... je supportais les frais d'une organisation dispendieuse à Montréal, qu'on a paralysée, pour la faire s'occuper des chicanes personnelles du district du Québec.⁷⁹

The trio's persistent demands for satisfaction of their grievances increasingly antagonized Raymond. The coldness of the tone of his statement of 30 November is unmistakable and he firmly indicated that he would make no concessions. By January 1944 it was no longer simply a question of a conflict between Lacroix and the trio. There was also a serious conflict between the trio and Raymond.

Raymond's decision not to make concessions to the trio would seem to have been accepted by the other Bloc activists, including several who were former collaborators of Paul Gouin in l'Action Libérale Nationale. Marie-Louis Beaulieu, who had played an important role in bringing the trio and Raymond together to form the party, remained an active Bloc member after the trio's departure. Victor Trépanier, who had once been a strong supporter of Paul Gouin's position and who had campaigned in Stanstead only on the urging of Abbé Groulx, seems to have become even hostile to the trio following the by-election. He applauded Raymond's statement of 30 November as "opportune" and predicted that it would solve the Bloc's

problems by eliminating "des éléments troubles et chicaniers ..."⁸⁰ In December Trépanier wrote to Groulx that the party was resolved to forge ahead and to ignore the "chicanes stériles et criminelles":

La chicane ... n'intéresse pas notre génération et nous ne permettrons pas qu'elle paralyse plus longtemps un mouvement si prometteur.⁸¹

Bloc members such as Pierre Audet who had closer associations with Lacroix than with the trio naturally showed little regret at the prospect of losing the collaboration of the trio.⁸² There were also no doubt many members who, while sympathetic to the position of Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult, felt they should remain loyal to the party and work towards a nationalist victory.

Shortly before Raymond's rejection of the trio's proposals for restructuring the Bloc, preparations were begun for a general convention of the Bloc. The party caucus meeting in Montreal on December fifth decided to organize a general party convention for the early part of 1944. On 7 January the party announced that the convention would be held from 3 to 6 February at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal. The purpose of the convention, the announcement stated, would be to study the party platform as outlined by leader Maxime Raymond the previous October, and to prepare the members of the Bloc for the election campaign they would soon be facing, perhaps federally as well as provincially.⁸³

While still plagued by dissension internally, the party publicly attempted to project an image of stability and confidence. The party received added exposure in January from

an interview of Maxime Raymond by Blair Fraser in Maclean's Magazine.⁸⁴ In the interview Raymond answered a number of questions which outlined the Bloc's platform and goals. Party broadcasts in January also spoke encouragingly of the progress which the party had made in terms of organization, particularly in the Montreal area where several constituency organizations had been formed.⁸⁵ The Bloc Populaire also announced that the February convention would also mark the first appearance of the party's new newspaper, Le Bloc.⁸⁶

No doubt a significant factor in the party's optimism at this time was Raymond's return to full activity as party leader. As Omer Héroux remarked editorially in Le Devoir a few days prior to the Bloc convention, Raymond had been asked to accept the party leadership because he had been considered the only person capable of uniting the disparate elements which composed the Bloc.⁸⁷ His long absence from the post no doubt had caused many doubts in some prospective members about the viability of the party. Any such doubts should now be dissipated, observed Le Devoir, which called for support of the party whose doctrine was "l'écho ou le prolongement de tout ce qui fût enseigné ici depuis trente ans et plus."⁸⁸

The Bloc convention opened at the Windsor Hotel on Thursday evening, 3 February. Over five hundred and fifty delegates from throughout the province of Quebec registered for the convention.⁸⁹ A few delegates also registered from Ontario and there was even representation from Manitoba and Alberta.

As expected, Paul Gouin, Dr. Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult were not among the registered delegates. Maxime Raymond was also absent from the opening of the convention Thursday evening. Detained in Ottawa by the sitting of the House of Commons, he sent his greetings which were read to the convention.⁹⁰ André Laurendeau, secretary general of the party, was the main speaker at the Thursday evening session which was one of the few convention sessions open to the public. His address to the convention emphasized the main tenets of the Bloc platform: opposition to the excessive war effort sponsored by Mackenzie King and the Liberal party; the demand for equal rights for both French and English-speaking Canadians; and the resolve to improve the social and economic conditions of the people of Quebec. The Bloc Populaire, Laurendeau concluded, was committed to work towards "un ordre chrétien, une politique nationale, sociale et canadienne."⁹¹

Maxime Raymond joined the convention Friday evening, receiving an enthusiastic reception from the delegates. He immediately responded to a resolution which had been proposed to the convention by the organizational committee.⁹² Passed unanimously by the convention, the resolution requested that Raymond,

... faire connaître le plus tôt possible, dans quel domaine, soit fédéral soit provincial, il juge actuellement devoir lui-même conduire ses troupes au combat, et qu'il désigne en même temps celui à qui il désire déléguer ses pouvoirs pour mener la lutte dans l'autre domaine ...⁹³

The resolution left to Raymond the decision as to when this

delegation of responsibility would take place and the length of time for which it would be effective. The convention also ratified in advance the decision which would be made by its leader.

Raymond chose to announce his decision that evening. In view of the challenge facing the Bloc members at Ottawa in opposing the imperialism of the Liberal government, and in view of the small number of deputies who had accepted that challenge since 1939, Raymond informed the convention that he did not feel that he could abandon the federal fight at that time. Consequently he had chosen to delegate his authority in the provincial field and had chosen André Laurendeau as the provincial leader of the Bloc Populaire.⁹⁴ The choice of André Laurendeau as leader in the provincial field was apparently popular with the majority of the convention delegates and was, in many respects, a logical one. Laurendeau, as secretary general of the party, had assumed a great many of the leadership responsibilities during Maxime Raymond's illness. In spite of a lack of previous political experience, André Laurendeau had become one of the Bloc's more active members and prominent speakers. He was also free of any previous association with any one segment of the Bloc and was free of ties with Edouard Lacroix. André Laurendeau as provincial leader of the Bloc might possibly represent sufficient guarantee to the trio to permit their continued membership in the party. However, it also eliminated in a most definite fashion the recent proposal made to Raymond on behalf of the trio that Paul

Gouin be named to lead the Bloc provincially.

The absence of Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult from the convention did not go unnoticed or unquestioned. The question was raised by a delegate Friday evening,⁹⁵ and Saturday morning it was announced that the circumstances surrounding the absence of the trio would be discussed that afternoon. The discussion was introduced by a resolution from one of the delegates, a student named Vaillancourt, calling on all nationalists to rally around Maxime Raymond.⁹⁶ The motion was seconded by Philippe Girard who immediately was given the floor to speak on the motion. Girard then proceeded to present a strong defence of Raymond's handling of the "imbroglio." If a solution had not been found, he declared, it was not the fault of Maxime Raymond. Reviewing the history of the Bloc, Girard implied that Paul Gouin and Philippe Hamel had provided only sporadic support for the new movement.⁹⁷ He particularly criticized Paul Gouin's failure to stand by the Bloc during Raymond's illness. Since Gouin had been among those who had asked Raymond to accept the leadership, Girard indicated that he should have stepped in and provided the leadership required during Raymond's absence. Instead Girard and André Laurendeau had been obliged to gather the reins of command. Illustrating the seriousness of the situation, he revealed that at one point the main participants in the Bloc had actually gathered in the office of Fernand Chaussé to compose the announcement of the dissolution of the Bloc Populaire.

Girard also emphasized the lack of co-operation from Dr. Hamel at this critical time, discussing at length the question of the assistant organizer for the Quebec district.⁹⁸ In enumerating the reasons why Hamel's request could not be granted, Girard treated the question very much as an unreasonable whim on Hamel's part. According to Girard, Hamel withheld his co-operation as long as his request was not filled. The failure of the trio to secure an assistant organizer of their choice at Quebec City was presented by Girard as one of the main reasons for their decision not to join the Stanstead campaign. The trio had attempted to win their way through the use of ultimatums which Raymond had refused. In particular he described an interview between the trio and Raymond, still ill in bed, when the trio callously pressed their demands on the sick man. Girard reported that Raymond had refused these demands, arguing that he could hardly eliminate two elected party members⁹⁹ simply in an attempt to secure the election of one.

Philippe Girard concluded his hour and a half long speech by declaring that there would always be petty quarrels in the Bloc Populaire, but he was confident that, with the help of André Laurendeau, the wounds of the present quarrel would heal. Noting that many Bloc supporters had pressed for the naming of Paul Gouin as provincial leader, Girard countered that Raymond had rejected the idea, not because he was a dictator, but because he felt that it would not work. The essential question facing the convention, he concluded, was

whether or not Raymond merited their confidence, and he urged the convention to place their trust in Maxime Raymond and André Laurendeau. Particularly, the convention must not be broken, which could be the result if the trio were called on to speak and explain their position. Girard warned that the possibility of part of the convention leaving to follow the trio, and part remaining loyal to Maxime Raymond, had to be avoided at all costs.¹⁰⁰

At the conclusion of Girard's speech, Emilien Rochette, a delegate from Quebec City, announced that Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult were willing to appear at the Convention and proposed that they be invited to present their version of the story. Several Bloc members, including Philippe Girard, strongly opposed Rochette's proposal. Jacques Sauriol supported Girard, arguing that the success of the convention could not be jeopardized.¹⁰¹ Pointing out that, while he was a friend of the trio and had campaigned with Paul Gouin in 1935 and 1936, he argued that the most important consideration was the future of the Bloc Populaire. Although he would certainly attempt to effect a reconciliation between the dissident members and Raymond, Sauriol declared that the authority of the leader should be respected. Jean Drapeau, Dr. Pierre Gauthier, and Marcel Poulin in turn argued against hearing the trio at the convention,¹⁰² maintaining that to do so would weaken the convention and the party, and would be a sign of non-confidence in the party's leader. Further efforts to present a motion requesting the

presence of the trio were defeated. Instead the Vaillancourt resolution calling on all nationalists to rally around the leadership of Raymond was voted on and passed.

This debate clearly indicates that support for the trio's demands existed within the party and that the "imbroglio" was far from being a dead issue. An open confrontation with the trio had been avoided and, by making the issue a question of confidence in Raymond's leadership, any protest in favour of the trio was smothered. The handling of the issue by those in charge of the convention indicates that Maxime Raymond enjoyed the full support of the party organization.

The convention spent most of its time in closed study sessions examining the platform of the Bloc Populaire as it had been outlined by Raymond in the fall of 1943. It also gathered in plenary sessions, which were also closed, to adopt resolutions endorsing the party platform which had been prepared for the convention by the organizational committee.¹⁰³ While discussion of the platform obviously took place, there seems to have been little attempt to modify or alter any of the points already presented by the party leader.

A plenary session Friday evening unanimously passed several resolutions on the federal policies adopted by the Bloc Populaire. The more important resolutions included a call to work towards the concrete realization of Canadian independence.¹⁰⁴ As indications of this independence the resolution singled out measures such as the abolition of appeals to the judicial

committee of the Privy Council, the adoption of a distinctive Canadian flag, elimination of any judicial control over the Canadian constitution by London, and the substitution of the words "Canadian citizen" for the term "British subject" in all official documents. The delegates also voted unanimously in favour of the recognition of equal rights for French and English-speaking Canadians.¹⁰⁵ This equality would be assured by the realization of the right to a French and Catholic education and by the effective recognition of French as an official language in Canada. The convention also indicated complete support for the concept of provincial autonomy, endorsing the theory that the provincial governments were constituting powers and that the federal government was a constituted power.

Provincial questions were discussed in study session on Saturday and Sunday and resolutions passed at a plenary session on Sunday. The primary aim of the Bloc in provincial affairs, the convention resolved, was the restoration and strengthening of the family unit, "la pierre angulaire de l'édifice sociale." In order to achieve this goal, the convention proposed concrete social measures which included the elimination of slums, the construction of healthy and sanitary housing, increased spending on hospitals and medical services, and fiscal reforms to alleviate the burdens on the family budget.¹⁰⁶ Several resolutions illustrated the autonomist character of the Bloc Populaire. The convention passed a resolution calling for the decentralization of the taxing power to restore to the provinces

the fiscal autonomy which they had been intended to have under the British North America Act. The convention also opposed any federally-sponsored plan of health insurance. Any health insurance program endorsed by the Bloc Populaire would have to be provincial in origin, designed to profit only those classes in need of the assistance, and inspired "de la mentalité, de la culture et des traditions de la province."¹⁰⁷ The convention also declared that the provinces be granted complete authority in the fields of labour and social legislation.

Other resolutions were passed by the convention committing the party to support and encourage the growth of agriculture, the expansion of colonization efforts, and the development of the co-operative movement.¹⁰⁸ One of the key resolutions passed by the convention expressed the party's opposition to the control of the province's economy by the "trusts" or large financial interests. However, while pledging opposition to the trusts, the convention delegates specified that nationalization would be used as a weapon in fighting them only in extreme cases. Preference would be given to methods such as control or competition by the state in attempting to curb the trusts.¹⁰⁹ This attitude was consistent with a resolution adopted by the convention defining the party's concept of the role of the state. This role, the delegates resolved, was a middle road between "l'Etat capitaliste, esclave du trust de l'argent, et l'Etat socialiste, esclave de la bureaucratie; ... une harmonieuse conciliation de la liberté et de l'autorité."¹¹⁰

The convention closed with a banquet on Sunday in the Prince of Wales room at the Windsor Hotel. The large Union Jack which usually dominated the room was covered for the occasion with an equally large fleur-de-lys flag.¹¹¹ Maxime Raymond closed the convention with a speech emphasizing the determination of the party to continue its fight for the nationalist cause. Denouncing the policy of imperialism followed by the Liberal government at Ottawa, Raymond declared the party's resolve to continue its opposition to conscription and the excessive war effort that was draining the country's human and material resources.

The convention was significant more for what it represented than for what it accomplished. Much of the actual work of the convention had merely been the approval of policies already established by the party leadership. However, the convention did provide an opportunity for the delegates from throughout the province to meet and discuss these policies with their leaders and to become familiar with many of the problems which they would be facing in the coming electoral campaigns. Most importantly the convention was a sign of strength and, in the final analysis, unity for the party. The challenge from the trio had been defeated and the party membership had remained behind the leadership of Maxime Raymond. While no doubt many members remained sympathetic to the demands of the trio, the party as a whole was committed to support the decisions of the leader, Maxime Raymond.

The manner in which "l'imbroglia" had been treated at the convention prompted an immediate response from the trio. On Monday, 7 February, Paul Gouin addressed a letter on behalf of the trio to the directors¹¹² of the Bloc Populaire, a copy of which was also sent to Maxime Raymond. Referring to the Saturday afternoon session of the convention, Gouin accused the Bloc leaders of having committed an injustice towards the trio "que nous ne voulons pas qualifier pour le moment."¹¹³ As a result of what had happened at the convention, the confidence of the trio in the directors of the Bloc had been severely shaken and they now felt justified in denouncing the attitude of the party leadership. However, in spite of the repeated refusals which had met their previous attempts to reach a settlement, the trio wrote, they were still willing to study any serious and honourable proposition which the leaders of the Bloc might put forward to settle their differences. In view of the circumstances the trio requested that any such proposal be communicated to them by the end of the week.¹¹⁴ Copies of the letter were delivered personally to André Laurendeau and Maxime Raymond by Bloc members sympathetic to the trio.¹¹⁵ According to the trio's version of the story, in neither instance were their messengers greeted by any indication of a willingness for conciliation.¹¹⁶

Late Saturday evening Paul Gouin received a reply from Maxime Raymond. Explaining that no one had ever been excluded from the Bloc, Raymond stated that if the trio had not been invited to the recent convention, it was because they had clearly indicated their decision to discontinue their activity in the

party as long as Edouard Lacroix was also a member. His concluding sentence returned the initiative to the trio. Declaring his own willingness to co-operate, Raymond invited that,

Toute suggestion de nature à assurer une collaboration franche et loyale et à maintenir l'unité du mouvement sera toujours accueillie.¹¹⁷

Raymond's letter, lacking any proposal on his part, left the initiative once more to the trio. They replied Monday, the fourteenth, by a statement in *Le Devoir* which conclusively brought the issue before the public. Referring to the growing concern in nationalist circles over the failure to realize unity within the Bloc Populaire, the trio declared that they had, until then, refrained from any explanations on their part in hopes of finding an acceptable formula for co-operation.¹¹⁸ However, events which occurred during the Bloc convention had forced them to inform their friends and the public of the circumstances.

Their absence from the convention, the statement continued, had been due solely to the fact that care had been taken not to invite them. In addition, several nationalists sympathetic to the position of the trio had also been eliminated from the lists of convention delegates. However, the trio were most disturbed over the fact that while they were not present to defend themselves, a version "hautement fantaisiste" and unfair to the trio had been presented to explain the internal difficulties of the Bloc.¹¹⁹ Any effort on the part of their supporters to defend the trio, the statement claimed, or to call the trio to

defend themselves, had been summarily refused by the convention organizers.

However, the trio expressed concern over more than the events of the convention. If the trio had recently abstained from activity in the Bloc, it was because,

... on nous refuse obstinément la garantie que notre mouvement ne décevra pas, une fois au pouvoir, la confiance que le peuple aura mise en lui et que notre présence aurait contribué à lui attirer. Nous ne voulons pas le renouvellement du "1936". De plus, c'est en vain que nous avons jusqu'ici tenté d'obtenir le redressement de certaines situations de fait dangereuses, la rectification de certains états d'esprit inquiétants.¹²⁰

The trio did not feel that they could resume their participation in the Bloc Populaire until such situations had been corrected. While not directly specifying the nature of their objections, the trio concluded their statement by announcing that Paul Gouin, in a forthcoming radio broadcast, would present the true version of the "imbroglio" and would define the attitude which the trio intended to adopt in the future.

In the meantime Paul Gouin had arranged a meeting with André Laurendeau. The interview took place Wednesday, 16 February, at Laurendeau's home in Outremont.¹²¹ At that time Gouin presented a proposal which the trio considered a fair and honourable settlement of their grievances. This latest proposal was again intended to give the trio an official voice in the provincial leadership of the party. It called for the appointment of Dr. Philippe Hamel as André Laurendeau's first lieutenant in the district of Quebec City, and the appointment of Gouin to a similar position in the Montreal district. As a last resort

Gouin also suggested a division of counties in the province between the Bloc and the trio, since the latter could see no way that the Bloc could successfully launch a province-wide campaign in the short period left before elections.¹²² The following day, the seventeenth, Gouin informed Raymond by letter of the proposal which he had presented to Laurendeau. Although Raymond had already rejected several of the trio's proposals, Gouin wrote, he hoped that this time Raymond would find it possible to accept their suggestions. If not, the trio requested that Raymond formulate "une contre-suggestion honorable pour toutes les parties en cause."¹²³ Gouin again objected to Raymond's interpretation of the "imbroglio" as a personality conflict between Edouard Lacroix, on the one hand, and Hamel, Chaloult, and himself on the other. As he had repeatedly tried to explain, wrote Gouin,

... le cas Lacroix n'est qu'un angle du problème, que celui-ci a des causes plus graves, plus profondes, comme, par exemple, le fait que vous n'avez pas su nous témoigner et nous prouver votre confiance, que vous n'avez pas cru devoir collaborer avec nous.¹²⁴

The trio's proposal that Gouin and Hamel be appointed Laurendeau's lieutenants was refused by Raymond. In a reply to Gouin dated 21 February Raymond objected to the proposal on the grounds that the leadership should not be divided:

Quant à l'organisation proprement dite de notre mouvement l'expérience du passé m'oblige à croire qu'elle doit être centralisée sous la direction d'un seul chef. Les événements de 1935 et 1936 ont démontré que le manque de cohésion des forces nationales a entraîné à ce moment-là des compromis et des divergences de vues regrettables entre hommes politiques possédant les mêmes idées et animés des mêmes bonnes intentions.¹²⁵

Raymond made a counter-proposal which, he hoped, would satisfy the views of the trio. Any question concerning the district of Quebec or the district of Montreal, he suggested, would first be discussed with Dr. Hamel or Gouin respectively before decisions were made, while both men would be consulted before any decision was reached on major policy questions in both the federal and provincial spheres. Any plans affecting the future of the party could also be carried out with the close co-operation of Dr. Hamel at Quebec City, and Paul Gouin at Montreal, Raymond wrote. This represented, he felt, a formula of collaboration "raisonnable à tous les points de vue" and which would dispel any apprehensions of the part of the trio.¹²⁶

The trio did not consider Raymond's counter-suggestion a reasonable solution to the problem and interpreted it as "un refus formel d'entente sur une base honorable et équitable."¹²⁷ While Maxime Raymond might consider it an honourable solution to the problem, the trio considered it simply the continuation of a state of affairs against which they were protesting. As the trio later explained their reason for refusing Raymond's offer,

Nous savions ce qu'il fallait entendre par la promesse de M. Raymond de nous consulter: nous savions qu'il ne nous consulterait pas plus à l'avenir qu'il ne nous avait consultés dans le passé; nous savions que son offre n'était qu'un trompe-l'oeil parce qu'il avait à maintes et maintes reprises déclaré ... n'avoir aucune confiance en nous. S'engager publiquement à consulter les gens en qui, privément, on affirme n'avoir aucune confiance est une manoeuvre habile peut-être, mais que le public jugera et qualifiera lui-même.¹²⁸

On 26 February, Maxime Raymond released to the press a statement which was obviously intended to terminate the discussion.¹²⁹ The statement declared that, following the Bloc convention at the beginning of February, concerned supporters of the Bloc had pressed Raymond to renew efforts to bring the trio back into the Bloc Populaire. He had willingly agreed, Raymond continued, as he had always desired the close co-operation of those who supported the ideals represented by the Bloc. Referring to his letter to Gouin of 12 February, Raymond reported that he had invited Gouin to offer any suggestions which would lead to a frank and loyal co-operation.¹³⁰ André Laurendeau, acting as intermediary, then communicated the suggestion offered by Gouin to Raymond. Raymond's statement then reprinted in full Raymond's reply to Gouin on 21 February in which Raymond rejected the proposal to make Gouin and Hamel the lieutenants of Laurendeau, in favour of an offer of consultation. This offer, Raymond continued in his statement was simply refused by the trio. In fact, he added,

... il ne me restait plus qu'à offrir à M. Gouin et à ses amis ma place comme chef du Bloc ou qu'à leur déléguer les pouvoirs que j'avais déjà délégués à M. Laurendeau à la suite d'un voeu unanime du Congrès.¹³¹

The public was well aware, he continued, that neither Laurendeau nor himself had sought the posts they occupied. He had accepted the Bloc leadership at the request of others, including Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult, and if he continued the responsibility now, even at the risk of his life, it was because he realized that the cause of social and national reform which he served required such devotion. For his part, Raymond's statement

asserted,

... je considère avoir rempli mon devoir envers la population de cette province désireuse de voir régner une fois pour toutes l'union et la collaboration. Je suis d'autant plus à l'aise en cette circonstance que je n'ai pas même d'ambition légitime à satisfaire et que seul l'intérêt de mes concitoyens me préoccupe.¹³²

Since he had made every possible effort to reach a solution to the difficulties within the Bloc, Raymond considered the subject "clos définitivement." Anyone sincerely wishing to co-operate with them was warmly welcome, but the party was not going to stop in mid-stream because some members had ceased their participation. The statement concluded with a renewed call for unity to the voters of the province.

Raymond's statement appeared on Saturday. It was repeated during a radio broadcast that weekend by Victor Trépanier, who asserted that Raymond had "tout tenté et tous supporté"¹³³ to end the imbroglio. He also recalled the words by which Gouin had appealed to the people of Quebec to support Raymond and the newly formed Bloc Populaire in the fall of 1942, reminding Gouin,

A cette tâche sacrée, nu n'a le droit de se dérober.
Aucun prétexte, aucune reculade ne trouvera grâce devant l'histoire.¹³⁴

The trio replied to Raymond's statement with a burst of protest. The following evening Paul Gouin explained the trio's side of the story during a radio broadcast on behalf of the trio.¹³⁵ The purpose of the public discussion of their story was not merely personal justification, Gouin explained. The trio was convinced that in the interest of the nationalist cause, the

people should be warned of the true situation within the Bloc Populaire and it should be made clear that it had been the leaders of the Bloc Populaire, not the trio, who had rejected the final possibility of reconciliation. Gouin particularly resented the implication in Raymond's statement that the renewed efforts for a reconciliation after the party convention had been instigated by Raymond. Pointing out that it had been the trio who had first contacted Raymond on 7 February, he added that it was always the trio who had offered suggestions for solutions which had, in turn, been repeatedly rejected by Raymond.¹³⁶ Contrary to the impression given by Raymond, Gouin explained, the cause of the "imbroglio" in the Bloc Populaire was not simply a personality conflict between the trio and Lacroix. Their position was solidly based on "une question primordiale de principes."¹³⁷ In relation to Lacroix, their dissension was based on their discovery shortly after the Bloc was formed, that an agreement had already been reached between Raymond and Edouard Lacroix which gave Lacroix complete financial control of the thirty-five constituencies which formed the district of Quebec. The trio should have been informed of this agreement before the party was formed, Gouin claimed, as this knowledge would have completely modified their attitude. Since Lacroix was directly responsible for all expenses within the district of Quebec such as salaries, costs of broadcasts and rallies, and campaign expenditures, he was in fact the leader of the party in that district. Gouin described the situation as "un Etat dans l'Etat," and declared that it simply reverted to the old system

of the old parties -- "la dictature des bailleurs de fonds électoraux."¹³⁸

However, Gouin further explained that the trio's dissatisfaction stemmed from a situation more serious and basic than Lacroix's influence in the party. The most serious protest of the trio was based on the fact that Maxime Raymond had repeatedly indicated that he had no trust in the members of the trio. The Lacroix incident had illustrated to them that,

... M. Raymond n'avait pas confiance en nous, qu'il ne voulait pas collaborer avec nous autrement qu'en paroles, qu'il ne voulait pas nous accorder les postes de commande que le public réclamait pour nous comme garantie de l'exécution de notre programme ...¹³⁹

Gouin expressed the opinion that the leadership positions should have been shared among those both interested in them and qualified for them, the members of the trio included, while in reality they had been systematically eliminated from them. Two distinct groups had failed to come to agreement in the Bloc, Gouin continued: Maxime Raymond, Edouard Lacroix, and Dr. Pierre Gauthier on the one hand; and himself, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult on the other. Because of the past experience and interest of the first group in federal matters, and of the second group in provincial matters, Gouin explained, the trio had suggested that this division be used to provide the basis for a compromise. They had suggested creating a federal and a provincial wing of the party. While Raymond, Lacroix, and Gauthier would concentrate on the federal involvement of the Bloc, the trio would limit themselves to their primary field of interest, provincial politics. A provincial leader could be

named by a convention.¹⁴⁰

According to Gouin, this proposal was first made to Maxime Raymond by René Chaloult in the summer of 1943 and was put forward several times in October and November by himself and mutual friends. The latest proposal of that nature had been made on their behalf at the beginning of January by Philippe Ferland. Gouin pointed out that Maxime Raymond last refused the proposal on 12 January, arguing that unity of leadership was essential to the strength of the party. Yet three weeks later, once the members of the trio had been safely eliminated from the party, Raymond had appointed Laurendeau provincial leader.

Gouin then went on to review the negotiations which followed the convention, emphasizing the main overtures on the part of the trio and pointing out the lack of response from Maxime Raymond. He was particularly indignant about Raymond's assertion that the only course left open to satisfy Gouin and Hamel would be to hand over to them the positions occupied by Raymond and Laurendeau:

Une fois de plus, je contiens mon indignation devant un tel procédé; une fois de plus, je m'abstiens de qualifier comme il conviendrait les assertions de M. Raymond.¹⁴¹

On 29 February René Chaloult announced in the Legislative Assembly that Raymond "a consommé publiquement la rupture qu'il désirait et recherchait avec avidité depuis si longtemps."¹⁴² Chaloult prefaced his explanation of his own abstention from the Bloc by defining the motivation of his own political career -- the economic liberation of French Canadians. He added that,

A moins qu'on ne change sans délai son orientation, ce n'est pas encore le Bloc qui nous conquerra notre indépendance économique ...¹⁴³

Chaloult expressed concern over the impreciseness of the Bloc's platform in the area of nationalization. Nationalization, he asserted, was the most efficient means of defeating the trusts, yet the Bloc offered only limited endorsement of this measure. The Bloc platform made no mention of the nationalization of insurance and credit companies. Instead, it praised the benefits of private ownership, so much so Chaloult felt, that it seemed as if they sought to avoid completely the state control of enterprises.¹⁴⁴

However, Chaloult conceded, he would have accepted the Bloc platform had it been actively supported by men such as Paul Gouin and Dr. Philippe Hamel, who had fought and sacrificed for fifteen years to win Quebec's economic independence. Not only were Gouin and Hamel no longer present in the Bloc, Chaloult continued, but its federal leader, Maxime Raymond, was ill and therefore limited in his political activity. André Laurendeau, the provincial leader, had had little experience in politics, and in the past had shown more interest in federal questions. Of the two remaining "vedettes" of the Bloc Populaire, Lacroix and Gauthier, Chaloult said little but the implication was clear:

Faudrait-il donc compter sur eux pour mâter les trusts?
Je n'insiste pas: on connaît le nationalisme de ces messieurs ...¹⁴⁵

For these reasons, Chaloult concluded, in order to remain faithful to the principles which he had upheld throughout his

career, he no longer felt he could participate in the activities of the Bloc Populaire.

This same distrust of the elements composing the Bloc was expressed by Paul Gouin during a speech on the radio the evening of 5 March.¹⁴⁶ The Bloc harboured several disparate groups under its banner, he explained. The first group he named were the Federalists or, he clarified, those who sought the solution for the problems of French Canada in the federal sphere. Their nationalism was concerned with issues such as an independent Canada, an equitable role for French Canadians in the civil service, and bilingual money. Yet, they were satisfied with the social and economic system, not realizing that the bilingual money which they demanded would never benefit their fellow French Canadians.

Another group described by Gouin was "une équipe de jeunes et de moins jeunes" of no previous political experience or conviction, whose nationalism consisted of,

... une aversion farouche, injuste et inconsidérée de tout ce qui est anglais et dont l'action, si elle devenait prépondérante comme il faut le craindre actuellement, n'aurait qu'un résultat: introduire dans Québec et y maintenir une atmosphère de guerre civile extrêmement inquiétante et dangereuse.¹⁴⁷

Gouin also singled out the presence of opportunists within the Bloc, whose activity was motivated by personal ambition rather than nationalist conviction. All these groups were united by one common goal, Gouin maintained:

... ou bien ils considéraient la lutte au provincial comme secondaire ou bien ils ne voulaient instaurer dans Québec aucune doctrine constructive et vraiment pro-Canadienne-Française. Pour tout argument politique, ils se conten-

taient d'un vulgaire électoralisme dicté par les circonstances: la guerre, la conscription, les milliards.¹⁴⁸

Because of the trio's concern for radical social and economic reforms within a primarily provincial context, none of these groups welcomed their presence within the party.

However, Gouin continued, the trio would have been able to resist the efforts of these groups to direct the Bloc to purely federal action had it not been for the presence of a numerous and influential group of Duplessis' followers within the Bloc.¹⁴⁹ This group, "une cohorte nombreuse, agissante, dirigée du dehors avec une habileté extrême,"¹⁵⁰ also sought to have the Bloc restrict its campaign to the federal field in order to leave the provincial field open to Maurice Duplessis. Because of their experience the Duplessistes had quickly gained control of much of the Bloc Populaire's organization, Gouin argued, and they had also succeeded in uniting all the other groups against the efforts of the trio to direct the Bloc towards the provincial field.¹⁵¹

According to Gouin, this coalition against the trio explained why they had not been able to gain the confidence of Maxime Raymond, why Raymond had continually rejected their proposals for collaboration, and why, finally, they had been excluded from the Bloc. All these manoeuvres clearly indicated only one thing, concluded Gouin -- the firm decision of the leaders of the Bloc not to conduct a serious campaign in the provincial field.

The documentation studied makes it difficult to assess Gouin's claims that the Union Nationale had extensively

infiltrated the Bloc Populaire. Many Union Nationale members and sympathizers had been active in La Ligue pour la Défense du Canada which, in turn, had formed much of the basis for the Bloc. Since the formation of the Bloc, Union Nationale members had declared their membership in the Bloc. While overtures appear to have been made by Duplessis to the Bloc in the fall of 1942,¹⁵² there is no evidence that they received any encouragement. It is certainly possible that supporters of Duplessis had infiltrated the Bloc by February 1944 and were actively lobbying for only federal participation for the Bloc, but there is no direct evidence to either support or reject such a claim. It seems doubtful that the Union Nationale had much influence in the Bloc at this time, for when the provincial election came, the Bloc did in fact wage a serious campaign, and in no way spared the Union Nationale from attack. Gouin's claim should also be evaluated in terms of the trio's extreme hostility towards Duplessis as a result of his actions in 1936. This hostility might cause them to see his pernicious influence when it was not present, or to over-emphasize the influence of Bloc members who sympathized with the Union Nationale.

The public explanations offered by the trio clearly indicate that opposing views on the orientation of the Bloc Populaire were the fundamental cause of the conflict between the trio and Maxime Raymond. While all claimed to be nationalists, the trio's nationalism was based on radical economic and social reform which, they maintained, could only be realized

provincially, while Raymond's nationalism was based on constitutional change in areas of federal jurisdiction. Raymond himself remained socially conservative. This divergence of view prevented Raymond from accepting the trio as his main advisers and from giving them the posts of command to which they felt they were entitled. Similarly, Raymond's lack of interest in the social and economic reforms championed by the trio did not provide a sufficient guarantee to the trio that their reforms would be implemented if the Bloc were to gain power provincially.

The personalities and feelings of the individuals involved also strongly influenced the events. While reputed to be morally incorruptible, Raymond was also stubborn and authoritarian.¹⁵³ Having accepted the leadership of the party, he was determined that his authority be respected. The trio's refusal to accept his decisions and judgment only reinforced his suspicion that they expected him to be only a nominal leader. He credited the trio's efforts to strengthen their position within the party with motives of ambition and deceit which the evidence does not support.¹⁵⁴ At the same time Raymond was easily offended over any suggestion that his own actions or decisions were prompted in any way by self-interest.

However, the trio were also known for their independent spirit and were not likely to accept relegation to the ranks. Dr. Philippe Hamel, in particular, was known for his frequent

refusals to compromise or to accept another's authority.¹⁵⁵

The trio also considered themselves from the beginning as Raymond's lieutenants. In asking Raymond to accept the leadership they no doubt also expected that they themselves would receive a share of the command positions. In Dr. Hamel's words:

Nous étions les fondateurs du nouveau mouvement, en plus d'avoir été les véritables éveilleurs de l'esprit nationaliste longtemps somnolent dans notre province, et c'était une iniquité flagrante de nous tenir la dragée haute puis de nous contraindre à quitter ce mouvement.¹⁵⁶

Because of their past service to the nationalist cause and because of the instrumental role they had played in the formation of the Bloc, they felt their requests for posts of leadership were perfectly justified. They were no doubt, too, aware of their popularity in certain nationalist circles and felt that this influence should be given some recognition.

Another factor which influenced the actions of the trio was their attitude towards Maxime Raymond. The trio was not ready to accept Raymond's complete control of the party and frequently complained of his dictatorial manner.¹⁵⁷ Nor did they have complete confidence in the Bloc leader. They seriously questioned Raymond's judgment in the case of Lacroix's membership in the party and felt that Raymond had become the "dupe" of Lacroix.¹⁵⁸ They also complained of his indecisiveness, claiming that Raymond could not make a quick and firm decision.¹⁵⁹ More important, they did not consider Raymond's assurance a sufficient guarantee that their reforms would be implemented by the party should it form the government

in Quebec. After 1936, Raymond's word alone could not convince them to commit themselves to the party.

Raymond's handling of the "imbroglio" is open to a good deal of criticism. In view of the trio's experience and prestige, their presence in the provincial leadership of the party would have considerably strengthened its chances for success. Certainly their alienation could only weaken it. Nor does there seem to be any justifiable reason for Raymond's obstinate refusal to give the trio leadership posts, unless one accepts the trio's claims that Raymond either did not have confidence in them, or was prevented from consenting to their requests by the opposition of Lacroix. There seems to be ample evidence that Edouard Lacroix exerted considerable influence on the Quebec district, particularly during Raymond's illness.¹⁶⁰ It is also clear that the hostility between the trio and Lacroix was completely mutual, and that Lacroix might very well have used the influence attached to his purse strings to exclude the three from any control of the party.

It is difficult to pinpoint the reason for Raymond's refusal to make concessions to the trio. No doubt the party's dependence on Lacroix for financial support of the Quebec district forced Raymond to treat him with some favour. In addition, throughout the Bloc's activities, Raymond showed little concern for the provincial involvement of the party and clearly indicated that he valued the presence of Lacroix and Pierre Gauthier, both federal members of Parliament, in the

party.¹⁶¹ However, in addition to these factors, the evidence strongly suggests that Raymond's personality was extremely important in the final outcome. Raymond's stubbornness, pride, and fear that the trio threatened his own position were factors equally as important as the political and financial considerations in Raymond's handling of the "imbroglio."

However, the trio's decision to bring the debate before the public was also ill-advised. Many nationalists, including Abbé Groulx, felt that the Bloc Populaire should be given every possible chance to succeed. The public criticism of the party leadership by the trio would inevitably shake the confidence of the voters in the Bloc. Since a provincial election was expected within a few months the trio's actions could not help but be detrimental to the party. The public airing of their grievances also eliminated any possibility of a reconciliation between them and the Bloc Populaire. While the trio's complaints were in many ways justified, it is highly debatable whether or not their decision to make these complaints public was also justified. They could very well have simply withdrawn from the Bloc without the publicity which resulted. While the evidence shows that the trio, themselves, were convinced that they were acting in the best interests of the nationalist cause, it is difficult not to conclude that their decision was motivated to some extent by personal animosity towards Raymond and the Bloc.

The trio prolonged the debate well into May. However, they elicited little response from the Bloc Populaire after

Raymond's statement on 26 February. Instead, the Bloc concentrated on preparations for the provincial election expected before summer. The result of this election, the first major electoral confrontation for the Bloc Populaire, would indicate the extent to which the Bloc's internal strife had endangered its chances of success. Before evaluating the Bloc's performance in that election, it is necessary to examine in some detail the programme of the Bloc Populaire.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER III

¹Le Devoir, August 16, 1943, p. 4. Paul Massé emphasized the numerous voting irregularities in the Cartier by-election and accused Fred Rose, whose name had originally been Fred Rosenburg, of deliberately misleading certain sectors of the constituency into believing that he was a Catholic and French Canadian.

²Le Devoir, August 19, 1943, p. 8. See also, Le Devoir, August 27, 1943, p. 8.

³Le Devoir, September 4, 1943, p. 3.

⁴Le Devoir, September 10, 1943, p. 3.

⁵PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol 80, copy of a letter, Henri Bourassa to Albert Perron, October 31, 1943.

⁶While no mention of this letter was found in the press, the opinion expressed in it by Bourassa seems to have become common knowledge to many nationalists, including the members of the trio. Public reference to this letter a year later by Bourassa would also indicate that its contents became fairly widely known.

⁷Le Devoir, September 22, 1943, p. 10.

⁸Le Devoir, October 5, 1943, p. 6.

⁹Le Devoir, October 8, 1943, p. 2.

¹⁰Le Devoir, November 15, 1943, p. 6.

¹¹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Beaulieu (Marie-Louis), M.-L. Beaulieu to Maxime Raymond, September 14, 1943.

¹²Le Devoir, October 4, 1943, p. 3. In particular the Bloc Populaire statement mentioned that the platform had been discussed at a caucus meeting on May 1, 1943.

¹³Various references to the possibility of an imminent election appear in Le Devoir throughout the fall.

¹⁴I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, René Chaloult, René Chaloult to Abbé Lionel Groulx, August 3, 1943.

¹⁵I.H., ibid., René Chaloult, René Chaloult to Abbé Lionel Groulx, August 5, 1943.

¹⁶I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Memo, "Entrevue avec R. Chaloult à Woodlands samedi 21 août 1943."

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Ibid. Raymond wrote that Chaloult would be satisfied if Dr. Pierre Gauthier acted only as nominal organizer for the Quebec district, while the man supported by the trio, Armand Viau, had real control as assistant organizer.

¹⁹I.H., ibid., Chaloult (René), René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, August 23, 1943. During the meeting at Woodlands, Raymond had requested that Chaloult submit his conditions in writing. These were sent to Raymond two days later in a letter.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, René Chaloult, René Chaloult to Abbé Lionel Groulx, August 26, 1943.

²²Ibid. According to Chaloult, Raymond informed him "sur un ton grave," that in spite of Lacroix, Chaloult would be the Bloc candidate in Lotbinière. Chaloult's comment was "Quelle générosité!"

²³I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Chaloult (René), Maxime Raymond to René Chaloult, August 29, 1943.

²⁴I.H., ibid., Chaloult (René), René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, August 31, 1943.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶I.H., ibid., Chaloult (René), Maxime Raymond to René Chaloult, September 10, 1943.

²⁷Ibid. However, Chaloult did not consider the issue closed and in turn wrote a long rebuttal of Raymond's accusations, presenting the argument of the trio. He particularly emphasized the considerable amount of time and money contributed by the trio to the Bloc during Raymond's illness.

²⁸Le Devoir, September 13, 1943, p. 10.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Le Devoir, October 18, 1943, p. 2.

³²Ibid.

³³Ibid.

³⁴Le Devoir, October 20, 1943, p. 3.

³⁵See above, pp. 8-9.

³⁶It will be remembered that althouth Dr. Hamel hesitated for some time before joining the Bloc Populaire, René Chaloult was among the first to declare his membership in the party. Edouard Lacroix, on the other hand, was silent for some time about the new party, so long in fact that his colleague Dr. Pierre Gauthier showed some concern over whether or not Lacroix would actually join. Then it was Dr. Gauthier who was named organizer of the Quebec district, not Edouard Lacroix. In fact Raymond denied on a number of occasions that Lacroix exerted any more influence than any other party member in the Bloc organization at Quebec City.

³⁷Ibid. The article also noted that the absence of Dr. Hamel and René Chaloult did not seem to have had a visible effect on the results of the election.

³⁸I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Georges Pelletier to Maxime Raymond, September 13, 1943.

³⁹Le Devoir, October 21, 1943, p. 3.

⁴⁰PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol 80, Philippe Hamel to Paul Gouin, October 20, 1943.

⁴¹Le Devoir, November 4, 1943, p. 10. At the same time Lacroix denied any connection whatsoever with the trusts.

⁴²Lacroix referred to Hamel somewhat derisively in one statement as "un homme qui se prétend l'emblème et la personification de toutes les vertus civiques." Le Devoir, November 18, 1943, p. 3. Hamel in turn included in his statement on 26 November the text of the letter written to Hamel by Lacroix in December of 1942, which concluded with the statement, "Moi et vous pour s'entendre il faudrait que vous arrêtiez de parler de vos bêtises du passé." Le Devoir, November 26, 1943, p. 3.

⁴³Le Devoir, November 30, 1943, p. 3.

⁴⁴Ibid.

⁴⁵Le Devoir, December 7, 1943, p. 3.

⁴⁶Le Devoir, December 10, 1943, p. 3. Three hundred and fifty delegates gathered from the Charlevoix, Chicoutimi, Roberval, Lac Saint-Jean, Abitibi, and Temiscamingue areas.

⁴⁷Le Devoir, December 10, 1943, p. 3. The report in Le Devoir simply states that Raymond "a défini la situation actuelle au sein du Bloc."

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Le Devoir, December 13, 1943, p. 6.

⁵⁰L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 3. "Mes efforts pour résoudre l'imbraglio." Although this plan was first proposed by Philippe Ferland, it is safe to assume that it was drawn up either by, or in consultation with, the members of the trio.

⁵¹Ibid. There is no clear indication which members Ferland included in this group.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol 80, "Mémoire confidentiel à l'usage exclusif des Congressistes du Bloc Populaire Canadien, 3 février 1944." (Hereafter cited as "Mémoire confidentiel").

⁵⁴L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 3. "Mes efforts pour résoudre l'imbraglio." Ferland felt that the work of the Bloc Populaire federally had been made easier and therefore less costly by "l'effondrement du parti de M. King à la suite de la conscription ... " I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbraglio: Correspondance, Philippe Ferland to Maxime Raymond, January 3, 1944.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Ibid. According to Ferland, Paul Gouin preferred that the leader be elected by a Bloc convention. Ferland expressed the opinion that the matter could be more easily settled among the likely candidates themselves: Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, René Chaloult, and André Laurendeau. When Laurendeau protested that he had no interest in the leadership, Ferland replied that the problem became much simpler since both Hamel and Chaloult were willing to accept Paul Gouin as provincial leader.

⁵⁷Ibid. There is no indication whether or not Laurendeau actually argued in favour of the plan to Raymond. When Ferland asked Laurendeau, "Seras-tu un porte-parole sympathique ou convainquant?", Laurendeau replied, "Je serai un porte-parole fidèle de tous tes arguments."

⁵⁸Ibid.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Ibid. Ferland did not specify in his account of the meeting in whose name the contribution would be made. He simply used the pronoun "nous", presumably referring to himself and the trio. Nor did Ferland indicate the source of these contributions. He merely added that Raymond could not have misgivings about the source of these contributions since he knew their principal subscribers.

⁶¹Ibid.

⁶²I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglia: Correspondance, Philippe Ferland to André Laurendeau, Philippe Girard, Paul Massé, Fernand Chaussé, Eugène Therrien, Charles Roy, Marcel Poulin, Michel Chartrand, December 31, 1943. In this letter Ferland placed a considerable amount of the blame for the impasse on Raymond: "Mais parce que M. Raymond fait de tout le problème un conflit de personnes entre lui, Hamel et Chaloult, il ne règle rien et ne permet pas à notre groupe de travailler avec le vôtre sous le même toit. Son attitude divise l'opinion nationaliste."

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 80, "Mémoire confidentiel."

⁶⁵PAC., ibid., Vol. 80, Paul Gouin to Philippe Hamel, January 4, 1944.

⁶⁶Ibid.

⁶⁷PAC, ibid., Vol 3, Paul Gouin to Abbé Lionel Groulx, January 8, 1944. Gouin wrote: "Jusqu'à date, rien avait réussi à ébranler ma foi dans la cause à laquelle j'ai consacré toute ma vie. ... Et voilà qu'en 1943, l'injustice, la cruauté, l'ingratitude, le fanatisme et l'étroitesse de l'esprit, la mauvaise foi et la mauvaise volonté dont j'ai été le témoin et aussi la victime au sein du Bloc, ont ébranlé momentanément ma foi dans la cause nationaliste." He added that René Chaloult and Dr. Hamel had been treated "de façon vraiment révoltante."

⁶⁸Since most of the people with whom Raymond regularly discussed the imbroglia were in Montreal, there are few letters on the subject between him and other principals in the party in his papers. What documentation which does exist on his attitude consists of his replies to concerned party members who wrote Raymond inquiring about the situation or making recommendations for solutions.

⁶⁹See above, pp. 54-55.

⁷⁰See above, pp. 51-52.

⁷¹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglia: Correspondance, Maxime Raymond to Rev. Médéric Gravel, October 28, 1943.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, René Chaloult, Abbé Lionel Groulx to René Chaloult, August 5, 1943.

⁷⁴I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Lettres au sujet de l'imbroglia, Maxime Raymond to J.-E. Beaulieu, October 3, 1943.

⁷⁵I.H., ibid., Lettres au sujet de l'imbroglia, Maxime Raymond to Rev. Médéric Gravel, October 28, 1943.

⁷⁶I.H., ibid., Lettres au sujet de l'imbroglia, Maxime Raymond to J.-E. Beaulieu, October 3, 1943.

⁷⁷I.H., ibid., Imbroglia: Correspondance, Maxime Raymond to Rev. Médéric Gravel, October 28, 1943.

⁷⁸I.H., ibid., Lettres au sujet de l'imbroglia, Maxime Raymond to J.-E. Beaulieu, October 3, 1943.

⁷⁹I.H., ibid., Chaloult (Me René), Maxime Raymond to René Chaloult, September 10, 1943.

⁸⁰I.H., ibid., Lettres au sujet de l'imbroglia, Victor Trépanier to Maxime Raymond, November 30, 1943.

⁸¹I.H., Abbé Groulx Papers, Victor Trépanier, Victor Trépanier to Abbé Lionel Groulx, December 13, 1943.

⁸²I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Lettres au sujet de l'imbroglia, Pierre Audet to Maxime Raymond, November 11, 1943. Audet referred to Hamel and Chaloult as "nos éternels aspirants à la conduite suprême."

⁸³Le Devoir, January 7, 1944, p. 3.

⁸⁴Blair Fraser, "What Does The Bloc Populaire Stand For?", Maclean's Magazine, January 1, 1944, pp. 8-10, 35-36.

⁸⁵Le Devoir, January 10, 1944, p. 6, and Le Devoir, January 17, 1944, p. 7.

⁸⁶Le Devoir, January 10, 1944, p. 1.

⁸⁷Le Devoir, February 3, 1944, p. 1.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Le Devoir, February 3, 1944, p. 3.

⁹⁰Le Devoir, February 4, 1944, p. 6.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Le Devoir, February, 1944, p. 3. It would appear that the resolution had been prepared in advance by the party leadership and merely presented to the convention for ratification.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 4, "Témoignage de Jean Massicotte, délégué du comté d'Arthabaska au Congrès, les 4 et 5 février."

⁹⁶PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 84, Memo by Emilien Rochette, "Séance - Comité d'organisation B.P.C. Samedi après-midi, 5 février 1944, au comité d'organisation du Congrès du Bloc Populaire."

⁹⁷PAC, ibid., Vol. 84, Memo, "Résumé des principaux arguments invoqués dans les discours prononcés le samedi après-midi, 5 février 1944, au comité d'organisation du Congrès du Bloc Populaire."

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid. The reference here is to Edouard Lacroix and Dr. Pierre Gauthier.

¹⁰⁰Ibid.

¹⁰¹Ibid.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³While fear of a confrontation over the position of the trio might have been a contributing factor in the decision to keep the study and plenary sessions closed, it also seems to have been a practice commonly followed at Bloc Populaire congresses.

¹⁰⁴Le Devoir, February 5, 1944, p. 2.

¹⁰⁵Ibid.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Ibid.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Ibid.

¹¹¹Le Devoir, February 7, 1944, p. 2, 8. The traditional toast to the King was also omitted. The delegates instead toasted the Pope and Canada, followed by toasts to their leaders, Maxime Raymond and André Laurendeau.

¹¹²It is not exactly clear to whom the trio referred as "directors" of the party, but likely possibilities would include Raymond, Laurendeau, Philippe Girard, Paul Massé, Jacques Sauriol, and Jean Drapeau.

¹¹³I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglia: Correspondance, Paul Gouin to the directors of the Bloc Populaire Canadien, February 7, 1944.

¹¹⁴Ibid.

¹¹⁵L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 6, 7, "MM. Gouin, Hamel, et Chaloult répondent à M. Raymond." André Laurendeau received his copy at his country home at Saint-Adèle. Maxime Raymond's letter was delivered to him in Ottawa by Marcel Lafaille, a Bloc member sympathetic to the trio who had been a delegate to the recent Bloc convention.

¹¹⁶Ibid. Philippe Girard, who was present when the letter was delivered to André Laurendeau, was reported to have advised Laurendeau, that if he were him, "Je sacrerais la lettre au panier."

¹¹⁷L'union, March 11, 1944, p. 6, letter from Maxime Raymond to Paul Gouin, February 12, 1944.

¹¹⁸Le Devoir, February 14, 1944, p. 6.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 6, 7, "MM. Gouin, Hamel, et Chaloult répondent à M. Raymond."

¹²²Ibid.

¹²³I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglia: Correspondance, Paul Gouin to Maxime Raymond, February 17, 1944.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵I.H., ibid., Imbroglia: Correspondance, Maxime Raymond to Paul Gouin, February 21, 1944.

¹²⁶Ibid. André Laurendeau also wrote Paul Gouin expressing his conviction that Raymond's proposal was the one most apt to result in a settlement to the conflict within the party. PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 84, André Laurendeau to Paul Gouin, February 21, 1944.

¹²⁷L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 6, 7, "MM. Gouin, Hamel, et Chaloult répondent à M. M. Raymond."

¹²⁸Ibid.

¹²⁹Le Devoir, February 26, 1944, p. 3.

¹³⁰Ibid. It will be noticed that Raymond's statement omitted any reference to Gouin's first letter of 7 February which requested suggestions from Raymond which might settle the conflict.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Ibid.

¹³³Le Devoir, February 28, 1944, p. 3.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 8, "Causerie radiophonique prononcée le 27 février, par Paul Gouin."

¹³⁶Ibid.

¹³⁷Ibid.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Ibid.

¹⁴⁰Ibid.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 7. "Déclaration de René Chaloult à l'Assemblée Législative le 29 février."

143 Ibid.

144 Ibid.

145 Ibid. Chaloult added that he restricted his remarks out of respect for the period of mourning being observed by Edouard Lacroix who had recently lost his wife.

146 L'Union, March 11, 1944, p. 11, 12, "Causerie prononcée par Paul Gouin, le 5 mars."

147 Ibid.

148 Ibid.

149 Ibid.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid. Gouin commented that, while some might accuse him of exaggeration, he countered, "Alors, qu'on m'explique Stanstead et Cartier. Qu'y faisaient les gens de l'Union Nationale, leur argent, leur organisation et leur machine électorale?"

152 In the fall of 1942, Paul Gouin mentioned a "proposition Duplessis" in a letter to Horace Philippon which he described as completely unacceptable. PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol 9, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, October 7, 1942.

153 Blair Fraser, "This is Raymond," Maclean's Magazine, January 1, 1944, p. 9, 30.

154 In explaining his actions during the imbroglio, Raymond frequently gave the impression that the trio, motivated by their personal ambition, had attempted to seize control of the movement from him. He also at times hinted that there were extenuating circumstances which he was not at liberty to divulge, but which completely justified his actions.

155 PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 9, Horace Philippon to Paul Gouin, September 28, 1942.

156 L'Union, April 1, 1944, p. 5, "Philippe Hamel Parle ... "

157 Ibid.

158 PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 2, René Chaloult to Maxime Raymond, July 29, 1943.

159 I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Philippe Hamel to Maxime Raymond, February 1, 1945.

¹⁶⁰Even members who remained loyal to the Bloc Populaire, such as Marie-Louis Beaulieu and Victor Trépanier, complained about Lacroix's influence during this period.

¹⁶¹Raymond never participated in any of the provincial activities of the Bloc, nor did any of his speeches, other than those in which he outlined the provincial platform of the party, deal with provincial problems.

CHAPTER IV

THE PLATFORM OF THE BLOC POPULAIRE CANADIEN

The Bloc Populaire Canadien styled itself a "party of ideas" and emphasized the importance of the party's platform during both the provincial election of 1944 and the federal election of 1945. Particularly during its campaign in the provincial election of 1944 the Bloc stressed that, as a government, its actions would be determined by its ideology and by the platform which it had formulated. However, the actual formation of the party's policies took place gradually. The basic principles on which the party was based were outlined by Maxime Raymond on 11 October 1942, when he first announced the formation of the new group.¹ A more detailed exposition of the Bloc's platform did not come until a year later when Raymond, during three radio broadcasts in October of 1943, presented a more specific elaboration of the programme in areas of both federal and provincial jurisdiction.² When the party's first convention was called for February 1944, study groups were formed to examine the areas of major concern to the Bloc Populaire, but the resolutions as presented to and adopted by the Bloc Populaire convention differed in very few aspects from the party policy previously outlined by the federal leader.³ Further elaboration of the

party's platform took place through the publication of a series of pamphlets outlining the policies of the Bloc Populaire and in the columns of the party's newspaper, Le Bloc.

The Bloc Populaire divided its platform into sections of federal and provincial concern, separating the two areas according to the division of jurisdiction between the federal and provincial governments as outlined by the British North America Act. The provincial platform of the Bloc Populaire emphasized cultural, social, and economic issues, and proposed reforms which would improve the standard of living of French Canadians and strengthen their cultural identity. The federal platform of the Bloc was concerned primarily with the protection of the interests of French Canada as a whole, both in Canada and in the wider context of Canada's relations with other countries. Both sections of the programme were highly nationalist in tone and concentrated exclusively on the concerns of French Canadians.

In addition to proposing specific economic and social reforms for the province of Quebec, the Bloc Populaire also discussed at length the ideology on which those reforms were based. As Bloc leader Maxime Raymond explained during his radio broadcast outlining the provincial platform in the fall of 1943:

la géographie, l'histoire, notre tempérament national et les circonstances font surgir ici [in the province of Quebec] des problèmes particuliers.⁴

Therefore the solutions to these problems must be formulated within the French Canadian cultural and religious context and according to the tradition of French Canadian nationalist ideology. In claiming such French Canadian heroes as Papineau,

Lafontaine, Mercier, Bourassa, and Groulx as inspiration for the Bloc Populaire's ideology, André Laurendeau declared, "C'est parce que notre mouvement plonge ses racines dans le passé qu'il offre des garanties de l'avenir."⁵

Although the Bloc was concerned with raising social and economic standards within the province, it stipulated that material progress should be encouraged only when compatible with the superior interests of the French Canadian nation.⁶ Because the interest of the collectivity⁷ was placed above all other considerations, the Bloc Populaire designated their platform "une politique canadienne-française," designed primarily to meet the needs of the four-fifths of Quebec's population which was French Canadian.⁸ The Bloc Populaire justified the right of French Canadians to conduct their affairs in their own best interests by the fact that they formed the majority in the province. While the Bloc maintained that the rights of the English-speaking minority would be respected, it was determined to lessen, and even eliminate, the considerable influence of English Canadian interests in the formation of government policy in Quebec.⁹ The Bloc stated that the primary concern of the government of Quebec should be the interests of the French Canadian collectivity and the government of Quebec should therefore represent those interests both within the province and in the country as a whole. Protection of these interests might at times involve obtaining special considerations for the French-speaking province:

La Législature de Québec ne peut jamais oublier que notre province doit occuper parmi les autres provinces canadiennes le rang élevé que lui méritent son ancienneté, son histoire, le patriotisme et la valeur de ses habitants.¹⁰

The protection of French Canadian interests also required a strong representation of French Canadians in the Parliament of Canada.

Two other concepts traditional to French Canadian nationalist ideology were emphasized by the Bloc Populaire as basic to any truly French Canadian movement: the acceptance of Roman Catholic principles as the basis for the platform; and awarding to the family primary concern in the formation of all social and economic legislation in the province.¹¹ The Bloc viewed the declining influence of the family as the fundamental problem of French Canada, brought about by the emphasis on the individual found in the laws and institutions of modern, industrialized society. As a result, the Bloc chose the strengthening of the family unit as the primary goal of its platform, maintaining that the strength of a society as a whole was determined by the strength of the families which composed it. Consequently, it proposed that the family should receive first consideration in the development of all political, social, and cultural programmes in Quebec: "aussi le principe directeur qui orientera toute la politique du Bloc sera-t-il la défense, le maintien, et la prospérité de la famille."¹² The importance attached by the Bloc Populaire to the role of the family in building a strong and unified French Canadian society will become evident from a more detailed discussion of the party's platform.

The other important aspect of this "politique canadienne-française" was its acceptance of Roman Catholicism as an inherent feature of its ideology. In part this acceptance reflected the traditional relationship between French Canadian nationalism and the Roman Catholic Church, but it also revealed a new emphasis on the social responsibilities of Catholic laymen. According to André Laurendeau, French Canadians had previously neglected this role so that social philosophies foreign to the French Canadian way of life, such as socialism and communism, were gaining popularity within the province:

Parce que nous, laïcs catholiques, nous avons trop tardé à retirer de notre doctrine les principes et les remèdes qui auraient redressé la déplorable situation économique et sociale, voici que les étrangers à notre foi nous forcent, par leurs solutions hasardeuses et fausses, à placer notre politique sur un plan doctrinal.¹³

As had the Action Libérale Nationale in 1934, the Bloc relied for the inspiration of many of its social reforms on the encyclicals Rerum Novarum (1891) of Pope Leo XIII and Quadragesimo Anno (1931) of Pope Pius XI. These two encyclicals, outlining the social philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church, had had considerable influence on the development of social thought in Quebec. When the problems resulting from the rapid industrialization of Quebec and the experiences of the depression decade forced French Canadian nationalists to search for solutions to the social and economic problems of Quebec, many nationalists based their solutions on principles outlined in these encyclicals.

Quadragesimo Anno, enunciated in 1931, had exerted

considerable significance, particularly in its reiteration of the rejection of both socialism and economic liberalism as solutions to the problems of industrialism. At the same time it also emphasized the role of government in protecting the standard of living of the lower and working classes.

It is not surprising, therefore, that the Bloc Populaire declared that the ultimate purpose of a government should be to "permettre à tous les citoyens d'atteindre leur plein développement en hommes libres."¹⁴ Satisfaction of material needs was necessary as each person should have sufficient material goods to lead a life fitting to "la dignité humaine," but material well-being itself was important only as a means of ensuring the freedom of citizens to fully develop their moral and intellectual abilities.¹⁵ The Bloc described this ideal as a "société humaine" and its realization would require the co-operation of both individuals and the government. It was with the role of the government that the Bloc Populaire was particularly concerned, frequently emphasizing the moral implications of a government's responsibility. Above all a government should govern honestly and well,¹⁶ and, although concerned with improving the material well-being of specific groups, should place the general interest of the collectivity first.¹⁷

Within this concept of a "politique canadienne-française," the Bloc Populaire formulated its proposals for economic and social reform. Many of the economic reforms presented by the party were based on a very definite idea of the

role of the state in the economic and social activity of the province. According to the Bloc, the function of the state was to provide a general orientation for society by means of economic directives.¹⁸ However, in providing and implementing these directives, a government should only reinforce and not absorb the actions of individuals or smaller groups and, whenever possible, encourage individual initiative and the activities of smaller organizations.¹⁹ Quoting Pope Pius XI in Quadragesimo Anno, the Bloc maintained that "toute activité sociale doit de sa nature aider les membres de la société et non pas les détruire ou les absorber."²⁰ Therefore the Bloc pledged that one of its first concerns in the area of economic activity would be the preservation and, in some cases, the restoration of private enterprise.²¹ Individual enterprise and small industry had recently fallen victim to the centralizing tendencies of what the Bloc called "la dictature économique"²² of big business and the Bloc declared its intention of reversing this process: "nous favoriserons les entreprises de moindre envergure qui sont économiquement viables."²³

In instances where individual enterprises were proven incapable of competing with large industries, the Bloc Populaire proposed the establishment of co-operatives.²⁴ Since French Canadians were generally lacking in large amounts of capital, the co-operative movement, this "formule vraiment démocratique," was the only reasonable method for them to control their economy without resorting to an undesirable degree of state

control. Maxime Raymond had long been a supporter of the co-operative movement and, in particular, of the caisses populaires, and he pointed to the success of the Caisses Populaires Desjardins as an excellent example of the beneficent role which a co-operative could assume in French-Canadian society.²⁵

Through co-operative action, the people of Quebec could improve their own economic situation by providing themselves with goods and services at a more reasonable cost. To encourage the growth of the co-operative movement, the Bloc proposed a vigorous educational programme which would provide support for the co-operatives, and proposed to facilitate their organization through legislation on charters and loans. However, the party limited government interference in the operation of co-operatives so as not to interfere with the free and autonomous nature of their organization.²⁶

Although the Bloc supported the right of the individual to enjoy his own property and the results of his own endeavor, the party rejected the doctrine of economic liberalism and the inequality of wealth which it produced.²⁷ Again basing its argument on the conclusions of Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno, the Bloc Populaire deplored the manner in which the capitalist system had permitted large industries to exploit the natural resources and the labor force of the province while providing, in return, only minimal benefits for the population.²⁸ Because of the inequalities inherent in this system, wealth became concentrated in the hands of a few while an immense

proletariat lived in poverty and misery. Even the middle classes, the most stable element in a society, were, the Bloc argued, disintegrating under the "economic dictatorship" of business monopolies.²⁹

However, the Bloc Populaire rejected socialism as a solution to the economic problems of Quebec.³⁰ The influence of the Catholic Church, which had condemned both socialism and communism, was again evident in the Bloc's position. Although a socialist government would curb the influence of the wealthy and of big business, by transferring too much power to the state it would simply create another monopoly which the Bloc described as "le trust de l'Etat, lui aussi faiseur d'esclaves et créateur de misères, lui aussi risquant d'écraser l'individu et la famille."³¹

The platform of the Bloc Populaire presented an alternative to both socialism and economic liberalism in a doctrine "qui tient le milieu entre l'Etat capitaliste, esclave du trust de l'argent, et l'Etat socialiste, esclave de la bureaucratie."³² The alternative proposed by the Bloc was professional corporatism, an idea popular among French Canadian nationalists since the 1930's and which had appeared in both the Programme de Restauration Sociale in 1933 and manifesto of the Action Libérale Nationale in 1935. The Bloc's plan for the introduction of professional corporatism called for the formation of autonomous organizations of the professions and trades involved throughout the various sectors of the Quebec economy.³⁴ Trade and labour unions would be considered as autonomous organizations representing

the labour element. These organizations would form the basis of the corporate society. The establishment of these organizations or corporate bodies would not be imposed by the government, but would be initiated and carried out by those directly involved in a particular segment of the economy, whether those in question be owners and investors, employers and administrators, or workers and technicians.³⁵ The implementation of a corporate system in this way the Bloc called "corporatisme d'association,"³⁶ since it preserved the freedom and independence of the various elements concerned. The Bloc was quick to point out that this principle preserved the independence of labour unions. The party also pointed out that this method of initially organizing a corporate society, because of its voluntary nature, contrasted sharply with the manner in which corporatism had been instituted in fascist countries such as Italy.³⁷

These professional organizations, once in existence, would act as intermediary bodies between smaller social groupings, such as the individual and the family, and the state.³⁸ They would also fulfill certain social and economic functions which a government, because of its essentially political nature, should not assume.³⁹ Most of these functions would involve the direction and regulation of the economic sector of society, where the role of the corporative bodies would be primarily one of mediation within or between various enterprises, trades, or professions.⁴⁰ A professional organization could be called

on to act as a mediator in either an educational, legislative, jurisdictional, or judicial capacity. Its responsibilities would also include emphasizing the observance of high professional and moral standards, and promoting a spirit of co-operation among the commercial and industrial enterprises.⁴¹ Thus the whole economic sector would regulate itself through a co-ordinated system of direction in which all social classes would participate and to which they would all be subordinate.⁴² The Bloc particularly stressed this regulative function of the corporative structure, since it provided the control necessary to regulate the economy, but did not resort to the extreme state interventionism of a socialist system. At the same time it avoided the economic anarchy of unrestricted capitalism. Once the corporative society was organized, its economic and political sectors would exist as autonomous entities, neither being in a position to dominate the other.⁴³ Thus a system of economic direction free from government control was devised which preserved those features of the free enterprise system which the Bloc considered desirable, such as individual initiative, private property, and competition, while it eliminated abuses such as the unequal concentration of power and wealth.⁴⁴ Equally important, the Bloc maintained that it would inject into the economic segment of society the sense of social responsibility which was necessary to achieve their ideal of "un ordre social chrétien et humain."⁴⁵

The Bloc warned that the implementation of the corporative system would not be realized immediately. While it emphasized the benefit of measures such as the encouragement of individual businesses, small industry, and co-operatives, it realized that such steps would be insufficient to reform the economic structure of the province. While the Bloc Populaire maintained that the state should not participate directly in the formation of the corporate system, it pointed out that the obligation of the government was to facilitate the process by removing any obstacles to the corporate development.⁴⁶ The main obstacle anticipated by the Bloc was the opposition of what they called "la dictature économique," or the opposition of the powerful financiers and large companies which controlled the economic life of Quebec.⁴⁷ The Bloc condemned the policies of previous governments which had allowed such a small but influential group to exploit the resources of the province while ignoring the problems of the large but usually poverty-stricken proletariat which their system had created.⁴⁸ As a result, Raymond claimed, Quebec had become known as "le paradis des trusts," and short-sighted governments continued to give every advantage to these capitalists, frequently non-French Canadians, who were "étrangers à notre culture comme à notre foi, ignorants de nos mœurs, dédaigneux de nos institutions."⁴⁹

One of the first tasks, then, of a Bloc Populaire government would be the elimination of the domination of the trusts.⁵⁰ To lessen the financial advantage of certain large companies the Bloc proposed such measures as the abolition of

holding companies, the elimination of the practice of watering down stock, and the provision of more accessible credit to individuals, small businesses, and co-operatives.⁵¹ While supporting the principle of free enterprise, the Bloc maintained that the state must exercise an effective right of supervision and correction to eliminate abuses in industry and commerce.⁵² Until a self-regulating corporative structure could be instituted, the Bloc proposed providing regulation for industry through a temporary commission established by the government.⁵³ To be effective, such a commission would have to be made politically independent through the choice of nonpartisan members, and endowed with sufficient authority to act and the willingness to use it. One of the functions of the commission would be the prevention of the formation of cartels and monopolies.⁵⁴ It would also supervise certain industries where abuses were particularly flagrant. The Bloc indicated that possible areas for such regulation were the textile, tobacco, and brewing industries.⁵⁵

In certain exceptional instances, where other corrective measures had failed, the Bloc Populaire declared that it would not hesitate to use nationalization as a method of economic reform.⁵⁶ In some cases the government would then assume control of the production and distribution of certain public goods and services.⁵⁷ Nationalization would most likely be used in cases of abuse in industries monopolized by one financial interest, once it was evident that its administrators were

making no effort to reform their actions.⁵⁸ Exploitation of the province's natural resources to the detriment of the collectivity or unfairness in the distribution of public utilities or essential services might also prompt nationalization of an industry.⁵⁹ Areas which the Bloc singled out as possibilities for state intervention were the production of electricity, the ownership of the telephone and telegraph, and control of banking and credit, an area considered as a federal responsibility according to the B.N.A. Act.⁶⁰ When measured against the above considerations, the Bloc argued that the hydro-electrical industry was the most obvious case for nationalization,⁶¹ and government ownership of the production of electricity became a strong plank in the Bloc Populaire platform. The distribution of electricity, however, would be left to the municipalities or to local co-operatives.⁶² The Bloc also suggested this combination of state ownership and co-operative distribution or management for areas such as the telephone system. The Bloc platform also stated that the importation of certain products such as coal, gasoline, and oil should be carried out under a form of government monopoly, although distribution of these products could be effected either through regulated private enterprise or co-operatives.⁶³

In spite of the Bloc Populaire's willingness to resort to nationalization in some instances, it emphatically qualified its use of the measure:

La nationalisation toutefois n'est pas une fin, c'est un

remède extrême et exceptionnel, et le Bloc ne poussera jamais l'électoratisme jusqu'à oublier que l'important n'est pas de nationaliser mais de mâter la dictature économique ...⁶⁴

It also pointed out that, although their campaign aimed much of its attack against the business monopolies, the fight against "la dictature économique" was not the raison d'être of the party, but only the first obstacle which the Bloc would have to overcome in implementing its policies.⁶⁵ It was a fight, André Laurendeau emphasized, that the Bloc intended to "mener jusqu'au bout."

In addition to a complete reorganization of the province's economic structure, the platform of the Bloc Populaire also contained proposals to improve the social and economic well-being of specific groups among the population. Many of these measures were intended to strengthen the family unit and to improve its material comfort.⁶⁶ This concern for the family again represented the dominant influences in the Bloc Populaire ideology: the importance which Roman Catholicism placed on the role of the family as a moral and stabilizing influence in society; and the traditional French Canadian emphasis on large, closely-knit families as a means of encouraging "la survivance". In discussing the Bloc Populaire's "politique familiale," Maxime Raymond stressed the significance of the family for French Canadians: "chacun sait à quel point la famille a compté dans notre histoire, et que nous lui devons de survivre comme peuple."⁶⁷ Since large Christian families were the most stabilizing influence in society, the Bloc maintained that the

family unit should be the most important factor considered in the formation of all legislation in Quebec.⁶⁸

As part of the encouragement of the family unit, the Bloc Populaire convention of 1944 proposed an educational program which would create "une mentalité familiale" by teaching in school the advantages and contributions of the family as a social institution.⁶⁹ Then, to raise the standard of living of Quebec families, the Bloc proposed a series of reforms in such areas as income, social security, hygiene, and housing. Because the position of urban families had been altered the most by the process of industrialization, many of these measures were more specifically designed to benefit city families.

According to the Bloc Populaire, the incomes of most Quebec families were insufficient to cover their material needs.⁷⁰ Part of the problem lay in the low wages paid to workers in Quebec and the Bloc promised to raise wages to a more equitable level. In particular it specified that salaries in Quebec should be on a level equal to those paid in Ontario.⁷¹ Maxime Raymond emphasized that provision for the salaries paid to the workers of a company must take precedence over the issuance of any company dividends:

Il n'y a pas raison pour que les richesses brutes de la province, mises en valeurs par l'ouvrier autant que par le capitaliste, ne profitent pas, toute proportion gardée, à l'ouvrier autant qu'au capitaliste.⁷²

However, raising the level of wages alone would not solve the problem of a family income. Most of the problem was caused by the structure of the wage system in general, which, by

considering the worker as an individual, discriminated against those workers responsible for the support of a large family.⁷³ Under the existing system a single worker, with only himself to support, and a married worker, with a wife and several children to provide for, received the same salary for the same work. The Bloc maintained that the amount and type of work done should not be the only factor determining the salary paid. More important considerations were the responsibilities of the wage earner: while a bachelor should receive a wage sufficient for his own support, the head of a family should receive a proportionally higher salary according to the number of his dependents.⁷⁴ This system of determining wages would not only ease the burden on workers with several dependents, but would also encourage single people to marry and raise large families.⁷⁵ Maxime Raymond felt that single people should not resent such a system since "il leur permettra, infiniment mieux que le régime actuel, de fonder plus tôt le foyer auquel ils aspirent légitimement."⁷⁶ The Bloc proposed to further eliminate any inequalities still remaining after the implementation of its "salaire familial" through a system of provincially sponsored compulsory family allowances.⁷⁷

The Bloc further maintained that the system of taxation was also "anti-familial."⁷⁸ This was particularly true in the case of indirect taxes. For example, a single person when buying an article would pay the accumulated indirect taxes only once, while a father of seven children would pay the tax nine times over, once each time he purchased that article for a

member of his family.⁷⁹ However, the Bloc Populaire, while criticizing taxation in this way, did not state if it would work towards obtaining the elimination of indirect taxes or what measures it proposed to implement to correct the situation.

As a result of the insufficient salaries paid to many male wage earners, the number of women joining the labor force was increasing. Instances of married women having to work were particularly undesirable since, according to the Bloc, their role was primarily that of mother and homemaker.⁸⁰ Again, in opposing women in the labour force, the Bloc reflected an attitude characteristic of French Canadian nationalism and strongly encouraged by the Church. The party even denounced the temporary employment of women for the duration of the war, painting shocking pictures of women working long hours in factories under the most unsatisfactory working conditions. The participation of women in the armed forces received perhaps even greater criticism from the Bloc Populaire which predicted a worse possibility -- the introduction of the conscription of women by the King government.⁸¹

While the Bloc supported the idea of various social security measures to provide for the individual during periods of unemployment, illness, and old age, it felt that such a system should not be sponsored primarily by the government.⁸² Social security programs by the government involved too much direct state interference in the life of the individual, consequently sapping his sense of initiative and responsibility. Instead, the Bloc Populaire proposed that the main measures of

social security be carried out through non-governmental organizations such as co-operatives, mutual benefit societies, and the professional associations which would be established under the corporative system.⁸³ For example, the Bloc Populaire declared itself categorically opposed to socialized medicine, preferring instead a co-operative organization for the distribution of medical services.⁸⁴ In this way the distribution of medical care would remain private, voluntary, and nonpolitical. This type of organization would be primarily for the service of the middle classes, since the more privileged classes would not need it, and a certain number of indigents would always require state support.⁸⁵ In certain extreme cases where co-operation had proven incapable of meeting the needs of the population, the Bloc would allow the necessity of a government controlled program, but it would be initiated by the provincial government and only for those classes in need of it.⁸⁶

The Bloc Populaire's platform also called for improved hospital organization and service, particularly in regard to the treatment of diseases such as tuberculosis, venereal disease, cancer, and various children's illnesses.⁸⁷ It also emphasized the improvement of the physical fitness of the population of the province. Specific recommendations included educating the general population in the subject of proper nutrition, and introducing a compulsory physical education program under the supervision of qualified instructors.⁸⁸ The Bloc also emphasized educational programs in the area of general hygiene

and called for the immediate improvement in the services for prenatal and postnatal care.⁸⁹

Housing was another area where the Bloc Populaire felt that the needs of the people were not adequately met. It was also one of the few instances where the Bloc prescribed direct government action to improve the situation.⁹⁰ Urban slums were one of the more frequent targets for the attacks of the party and the Bloc emphatically promised the complete removal of slum areas and the construction, in their place, of sanitary but reasonably priced housing of a size suitable for large families. In some cases this would involve the complete rearrangement of certain urban sections to include public squares, parks, and playgrounds.⁹¹ Such a project, in addition to providing healthy and cheerful housing, could also be used as a means of providing work for the post-war unemployed. To provide long range planning for housing the Bloc Populaire proposed a housing service to study the problems of housing and urbanization.⁹² This would be only one aspect of a comprehensive and progressive plan of urban development supported by the Bloc. Its ideas of city planning emphasized industrial de-centralization around new and carefully planned districts.⁹³ So that such development would not take place in a haphazard manner, the Bloc Populaire proposed to introduce legislation on various aspects of urban development.⁹⁴ Although government action would play an important role in the improvement of housing conditions, particularly in slum clearance, "pour que l'Etat n'ait pas à

mettre son nez partout," the Bloc would also encourage the construction of co-operatively built and owned cité-jardins.⁹⁵ These housing projects would be specifically designed for occupation by large families. While measures such as these would undoubtedly be costly, the Bloc Populaire maintained that such expenditures were easily within the capabilities of a nation able to contribute billions of dollars towards the costs of the war.

In addition to providing for the material needs of the family, the Bloc Populaire was also concerned with the intellectual and moral development of the children. The teaching of strictly moral values was the role of the family and Church, but the intellectual and technical education of the youth was the joint responsibility of the state and Church.⁹⁶ Each young person, "étant donné ses aptitudes et son milieu," should have the opportunity to earn a good living and to advance in the social structure according to his ability and ambition.⁹⁷ Therefore an educational system should not be strictly uniform, the Bloc pointed out, but decentralized and designed to meet the particular needs of children from rural or urban areas, or from different economic regions. The Bloc Populaire also emphasized the importance of high pedagogical standards and promised generous support to higher and secondary education, "le principal dispensateur de notre humanisme chrétien et français."⁹⁸ While the Bloc stated that it would not discard the existing basis of the province's educational system, the party proposed to encourage

an education which would conform to the "besoins permanents et actuels" of French Canadians.⁹⁹ Such an education, according to Maxime Raymond, should prepare French Canadians to successfully carry out their "cultural mission":

C'est notre droit et c'est même notre devoir, par l'encouragement à l'enseignement supérieur, aux lettres, aux arts, de faire de la province de Québec un grand foyer de culture française en Amérique.¹⁰⁰

This concept of education caused the convention of the Bloc Populaire to resolve that,

... dans le domaine éducationnel, il faut s'appliquer non seulement à enrichir les intelligences, c'est-à-dire à instruire, mais aussi et surtout à former le coeur, la volonté, le caractère de l'enfant, partant à faire passer nos écoles du stage du centre d'instruction au stage d'institution de formation humaine, à cultiver chez la jeunesse, à tous les paliers d'enseignement, le sens économique, le sens social, le sens national, et le culte de la fierté française.¹⁰¹

The Bloc also proposed an educational system in rural areas more suited to the agricultural milieu, which would emphasize courses on agricultural techniques and problems.

The platform of the Bloc Populaire also indicated a sympathetic if somewhat paternalistic attitude towards the problems of labor. The Bloc presented the role of government in labor-management relations as that of a conciliator whose responsibility was to uphold the principles of fairness and to protect the weak from the abuse of the strong.¹⁰² Various comments by Bloc members clearly indicate that they considered labor the weaker and abused party. The Bloc supported the principle of collective bargaining and felt that employers should be obliged to bargain with the chosen representatives of their

employees.¹⁰³ Workers should also have complete freedom of choice of union affiliation and Raymond declared that the party was favorable to all unions, even international ones, as long as they did not "compromise national sovereignty or public order."¹⁰⁴ To facilitate the process of collective bargaining the Bloc proposed an effective law of conciliation and arbitration, and also promised to present an improved law regulating professional unions and collective agreements.¹⁰⁵ Since workers' associations would form an important part of the corporative structure, the Bloc pledged close co-operation with all such organizations.¹⁰⁶ Some of the more specific proposals regarding labor included close regulation of working hours and the establishment of a Tribunal du travail which would act as a final arbiter in any sort of industrial dispute.¹⁰⁸ The platform also recommended the re-organization of the Commission des Accidents to increase the indemnities paid for industrial accidents and for permanent disability resulting from such accidents.¹⁰⁹

Although the Bloc Populaire gave considerable attention to the problems of urban dwellers, the party still subscribed to the traditional French Canadian theme of the idealization of rural life. Throughout its existence the party awarded a position of importance to the farmer and considered "le milieu rural" as that best suited for raising a family.¹¹⁰ The agricultural column, "Chronique agricole," in the party's newspaper frequently reflected this idea of the superiority of

life in rural areas:

L'agriculture nous fournit le meilleur de notre capital humain et les meilleurs de nos institutions sociales. Elle nous crée de la puissance morale, de la puissance intellectuelle, de la puissance économique et de la puissance politique. Elle demeure le premier et le plus stable élément de notre fortune.¹¹¹

According to Maxime Raymond, because of the advantage of the rural milieu, "une politique saine et intelligente ne doit rien négliger pour attacher l'homme au sol,"¹¹² and the party presented numerous proposals to strengthen the economic position of the agricultural industry and to improve the living conditions of rural areas.

The Bloc Populaire hoped to increase agricultural productivity through the use of more modern farming techniques and machinery on the farms in Quebec.¹¹³ The new methods would be encouraged through rural educational programs which would emphasize agricultural theory. An institute of economic and scientific research in the field of agriculture would be established to propose on a continuous basis areas of improvement in the industry.¹¹⁴ Long term capital for farm improvement would be provided by transforming the Office du Crédit agricole into an actual farm mortgage bank, which would be administered jointly by the government and various agricultural organizations such as the Fédération des Caisses Populaires and the Union Catholique des Cultivateurs.¹¹⁵

The Bloc also recommended improvement in the conditions of the land itself and suggested improved drainage of swampy areas (in some cases recommending direct financial assistance

to farmers undertaking such projects), the liming of soils in highly acidic regions, and the clearing of stony land.¹¹⁶ All three of these measures would increase the land supply available for agricultural development. The Bloc also endorsed agricultural colonization, the policy which for years had been regarded by French Canadians as the solution to the conflicting problems of Quebec's expanding rural population and her limited amount of developed land. They proposed a number of basic changes, however, such as a better classification of land, the upgrading of the administrative personnel involved, and the greater use of mechanization in land development, to improve the effectiveness of the system.¹¹⁷

By encouraging the co-operative form of organization in new fields of interest, the Bloc hoped to reduce the production costs of the farmer and give him greater control over the industry in general. In particular, the Bloc singled out for co-operative action the production and sale of chemical fertilizers and agricultural implements, essential articles for the farmer but currently priced too high because of the monopoly of their production by private industry.¹¹⁸ Co-operatives could be useful in other areas too. The formation of co-operatives by dairy farmers was recommended as a means of retaining control of the supply of farm products to the dairies.¹¹⁹ Within the dairy industry, the distribution of milk, since it was such a necessary product, should again be the responsibility of co-operatives or of regulated private industry. The co-operative

organization of the tobacco producers and of the milling industry were also recommended by the Bloc Populaire.¹²⁰

The Bloc Populaire's program also included plans for greater diversification within the field of agriculture. Again through the advancement of credit to agricultural producers, the Bloc hoped to increase the production of crops such as linen, tobacco, and sugar beets.¹²¹ This would lead to the establishment in rural areas of related industries for the processing of these products. Preferably these undertakings would be organized as co-operatives. In addition to diversifying the agricultural production, the Bloc pointed out that these supplementary industries would also provide employment for farmers during the off-season and provide employment opportunities for the sons of farmers who did not wish to cultivate the soil.¹²²

These proposals of the Bloc Populaire reveal the importance which the party attached to the role of the co-operative in the improvement of the rural economy. Whenever possible, direction by the government should be replaced by control of the industry by the farmers themselves. This would require a certain degree of co-operation and organization among the farmers, which the Bloc proposed to encourage through co-operatives, sociétés mutuelles, and other agricultural organizations.¹²³ The Bloc felt that the operation of these organizations should be regulated by specific legislation which would include a law of "syndicalisme agricole."¹²⁴

The agricultural industry, like many others in the province, would also require a certain amount of regulation. For instance, the Bloc Populaire felt that prices of agricultural products should be controlled so that they would not fall below the cost of production. However, again to avoid excessive government control, the Bloc stated that such regulation would not be carried out by government officials, but by a commission directed jointly by the producers, middlemen, and consumers.¹²⁵

The main function of a government as interpreted by the Bloc Populaire was to provide "une orientation générale à la société qu'il dirige, et de voir à la santé du corps social en général."¹²⁶ Since the guidance provided by the government should be carefully planned and based upon expert advice, the party proposed the establishment of a "conseil politique" to be composed of competent specialists from various fields and disciplines who would study the most pressing problems of the province in relation to each other, rather than dealing with each problem in isolation. To be effective the Bloc maintained that it would protect the members of this council from any outside political or financial influence.

The Bloc Populaire also proposed two new institutions to be added to the legislative process.¹²⁸ One would be a commission de législation whose members, chosen from outside the Legislature, would study proposed pieces of legislation to make sure that their terms were clear and that they did not contravene any other existing laws.¹²⁹ The other would be a

means of providing a formal definition of the motives of laws in general, so that it could serve as a basis of interpretation of these laws.¹³⁰

The laws governing elections would also receive revision from a Bloc Populaire government. The party favored elections on fixed dates and the holding of by-elections within four months of the time a seat became vacant.¹³¹ It also proposed strict regulation of the financial contributions to political parties to prevent "la mainmise des trusts sur la politique,"¹³² and severe penalties for the abuse of electoral procedures.

While provincial autonomy was discussed primarily in the federal section of the platform, the provincial section did include some reforms intended to broaden the powers of the provincial government. In its desire to strengthen the provincial government the Bloc proposed several measures, such as the establishment of a provincial radio network, which encroached on areas of federal jurisdiction.¹³³

The federal section of the Bloc platform discussed the party's policies in those areas falling under the jurisdiction of the federal government. It emphasized what the party considered should be the three essential points of any federal policy endorsed by the province of Quebec. In the area of external affairs the platform called for the complete and effective independence of Canada. In domestic concerns the party pledged itself to support unrestricted provincial autonomy, and the full and complete equality of rights of French and English-

speaking Canadians.¹³⁴

The party proposed a number of widely-varying reforms in matters related to Canada's external policies, all of which would contribute to the effective recognition, both internally and externally, of Canadian sovereignty. Constitutionally, the Bloc argued, Canadian independence had been granted in 1931 by the Statute of Westminster, which, by recognizing the independence of the Dominions and their equality of status with Great Britain, assured them complete freedom to conduct their own affairs.¹³⁵ However, certain "vestiges coloniaux" -- political, economic, and sentimental ties between Canada and Great Britain -- prevented the effective realization of this independence.¹³⁶ Increased co-operation between Canada and Great Britain as a result of the demands of the war, particularly the financial contributions made by Canada and her participation in programs such as the Commonwealth Air Training Plan were further undermining Canada's hard-won autonomy:

Contre le peuple canadien se dessine la plus sinistre offensive impérialiste que nous ayons jamais connue ...
Que les forces hostiles, aujourd'hui déclenchées ne rencontrent aucun obstacle, aucune réaction, et demain nous serons impitoyablement attachés au char de l'Empire comme le wagon inerte à la locomotive, sans autre dessin que de suivre passivement, et cela, jusqu'au jour que la locomotive, encore une fois affolée, foncera dans l'abîme ...¹³⁷

The most immediate step proposed by the Bloc Populaire was Canadian withdrawal from participation in the war or, falling short of complete withdrawal, the adoption of a more limited role for Canada which would be based on the production of essential

goods and foodstuffs, rather than the supply of money and men.¹³⁸

The question of the extent of Canadian participation in the war naturally became one of the major electoral issues for the Bloc Populaire, since formation of the party had been prompted by opposition to the war and to conscription. However, the Bloc was also concerned with introducing measures which would have more long-range significance in assuring Canadian autonomy.

A number of the reforms called for by the Bloc Populaire concerned the implementation of measures which would symbolize the independence which Canada already possessed. Two of the more frequently publicized demands of the party were for a distinctive national flag, "dont le dessin ne serait ni inspiré par les liens sentimentaux, ni emprunté à un emblème étranger, mais l'expression des aspirations profondes d'un peuple fier de sa liberté,"¹³⁹ and the exclusive use of what the Bloc called the only true Canadian national anthem, "O Canada."¹⁴⁰ The party also called for the use of the term "Canadian citizen" rather than the designation "British subject" when referring to a person born in Canada.¹⁴¹ The Bloc platform also proposed that in the future the position of Governor-General be occupied by a Canadian citizen, rather than someone from Great Britain, and recommended that Canadian diplomatic and consular representation be increased and standardized.¹⁴² One member of the party, in discussing the Bloc's proposals concerning Canadian autonomy, even suggested that the celebration as a national holiday of the

anniversary of the Statute of Westminster would reinforce the feeling of Canadians of belonging to an independent country.¹⁴³

The Bloc also called for two important pieces of constitutional reform. The first would abolish appeals to the Privy Council in England, so that the highest tribunal would become a Canadian court.¹⁴⁴ The second involved the recognition that Canada had the effective power to amend her own constitution.¹⁴⁵ Maxime Raymond tentatively outlined what he felt to be the acceptable procedure for carrying out an amendment.¹⁴⁶ First, a vote in favor of the amendment by three-quarters of the two federal houses would be required, followed by ratification by at least seven out of the nine provincial legislatures. The majority in favor must always include Ontario and Quebec, a stipulation which Raymond justified by their overwhelming importance in the life of Canada, and by the fact that they were the two principal parties in the contract of which the B.N.A. Act is the outcome.¹⁴⁷ In instances where the provinces were concerned an amendment would require their unanimous approval.

The Bloc Populaire also felt that Canadian independence was compromised by the country's current economic and trade policies. It was particularly concerned over the large amounts of foreign investment in the Canadian economy, and proposed that the Canadian government encourage the substitution of Canadian money for foreign capital already invested in Canada.¹⁴⁸ This process was to take place gradually and, to

the extent that Canadian economic development would permit it, without recourse to any confiscation of property or assets. This proposal, Raymond argued, was not as impractical as many critics claimed, as shown by the facility with which the war loans had been subscribed, and the extent of Canadian investment in other countries.¹⁴⁹ The party denied that the preference for Canadian capital investment indicated a distrust of foreigners, but maintained that it stemmed from the conviction that "dans un pays où le sens national est peu développé, la présence trop massive de capitaux étrangers compromet dangereusement notre politique extérieure."¹⁵⁰

The platform further proposed that this step towards economic liberation should be reinforced by a diversification of Canada's markets, a factor which would assume greater importance after the end of the war.¹⁵¹ Pointing out that eighty percent of Canadian trade took place with the United States and Great Britain, Raymond remarked, "On voit combien cette dangereuse situation lie notre sort à celui de ces deux grandes nations impériales."¹⁵² Again denying any hostility towards these two countries, the Bloc leader maintained that the party's proposals for diversification of trade were formulated only with the motive of increasing Canadian autonomy. A major aspect of this diversification would be the termination of all unilateral trade preferences and the adoption of a policy of trade of an equal basis with any country desiring an exchange with Canada.¹⁵³ In particular, the Bloc Populaire urged

increased trade with the Latin American countries. In cases where major production patterns of the countries were similar to those of Canada, a massive trade in products of minor industries should be encouraged, and the Bloc pointed out that mutual assistance in the exploitation of undeveloped resources was an area of exchange which should not be overlooked.¹⁵⁴ While favoring "as much as possible" the principle of free trade, the Bloc declared that it would not hesitate to provide protection for industries when it would be in the best interest of the country to do so.¹⁵⁵

The Bloc Populaire also felt that a real Canadian independence could be encouraged through the application of a limited and selective policy of immigration. The Bloc was opposed to massive and indiscriminate immigration of the type which would make Canada "le dépotoir de l'univers."¹⁵⁶ This opposition to an intensive policy of immigration stemmed not only from fear of the cultural absorption of French Canadians, but also from the belief that Canada was economically incapable of absorbing a great influx of immigrants.¹⁵⁷ Fearing an unemployment crisis with the return of Canadian soldiers after the war, the Bloc felt that priority should be given to finding employment for Canadian veterans rather than enlarging the existing labor force.¹⁵⁸ The Bloc favoured a high birthrate rather than immigration as a means of increasing Canada's population; to achieve this goal it proposed the institution of their "politique familiale" which would encourage large Canadian families.¹⁵⁹

Once these conditions had been met, the Bloc advocated a policy of immigration which would be "accueillante mais en même temps sévère, sélective d'individus mais non de race."¹⁶⁰ The Bloc criticized the existing trend of immigration as being predominantly British in character, a factor which tended to reinforce Canada's colonial attitudes and prevent the development of a national consciousness.¹⁶¹ Some members of the Bloc Populaire saw in the encouragement of massive immigration a deliberate attempt on the part of a certain segment of the English-speaking population to preserve a distinctive British character in Canada and to counter-act, and eventually absorb, the French Canadian population.¹⁶²

The Bloc also established priorities within its immigration policy, suggesting that the government first encourage the repatriation of Canadians who, for various reasons, had left the country.¹⁶³ This would naturally include a large number of French Canadians who had emigrated to the New England states. Immigration, when permitted, should be restricted so that a balance could be maintained between natural growth and growth in immigration.¹⁶⁴ The Bloc also pointed out that a policy of limited immigration would permit a gradual assimilation of the new citizens. Since the object of immigration should be to encourage a population growth which would contribute to the prosperity and stability of the country, the government should give preference to those immigrants truly willing to adopt Canada as their only homeland. It was this group who, by

contributing at the same time their own traditions and abilities, would eventually constitute "le peuple canadien, dont les noms d'Anglais, Français, Ecossais, Irlandais et tous les autres, ne seront que des prénoms."¹⁶⁵ While encouraged to recognize Canada as the only object of their loyalty, the Bloc declared that new Canadians should be allowed to retain their own culture, language, and traditions, and pointed to the good example set by Quebec in the treatment of minority groups in that province.¹⁶⁶ In the choice of prospective immigrants, the Bloc indicated a preference for agricultural and skilled workers in an attempt to counter-balance the shift to urban life which had taken place during the war.¹⁶⁷ It claimed that the admittance of unskilled workers would only result in a larger transient population which would further aggravate the already severe social and economic problems of the cities. The adoption of such a policy would imply that Canada would not seek immigrants from the more industrialized countries.

The Bloc Populaire argued that Canada, as an autonomous state, should ally herself with those countries whose interests most closely coincided with her own. One of the major recommendations of the Bloc in this area was Canada's prompt adherence to the Pan American Union.¹⁶⁸ The Bloc's reasons for supporting this proposal were of both a political and cultural nature. Firstly, the Bloc pointed out, Canada, by her geography, history, and resources belonged to the hemisphere of the Americas, yet was the only country of the two Americas which did

not occupy a seat in the Pan American Union.¹⁶⁹ Secondly, the Bloc noted "l'existence, au sein de cette union, d'un groupe d'une vingtaine de nations de culture latine et de religion catholique."¹⁷⁰ The "communauté d'idéal" which animated this group of nations was more closely related to that of French Canadians than was that of the Anglo-Saxon countries. Association with countries of similar cultural and religious character would encourage the survival of the French Canadian identity within the predominantly Protestant and English-speaking melting pot of North America.¹⁷¹ In addition this association would be beneficial to the smaller South American countries as well, since "comme nous, l'impérialisme économique des Yankees les menace et ils peuvent être, d'un moment à l'autre, soumis de la part des Etats-Unis à un chantage comme celui auquel nous assistons depuis le début de cette guerre."¹⁷² Through economic and political co-operation Canada could lessen the interference of American interests in the political and economic activities of these smaller countries.¹⁷³ Because of the value of this Pan-American association to Canada, membership in the Pan-American Union should be given priority over participation in any other group, including that of the British Commonwealth of Nations.¹⁷⁴

Although André Laurendeau defended the Bloc Populaire against charges of being "anti-britannique," the party was firmly convinced that Canada's interests would best be served by complete dissociation with the British Empire and by severance of all ties with the Commonwealth. Arguing that the Commonwealth

association might become too demanding, Laurendeau explained that the Commonwealth did not greatly aid Canada and could compromise her autonomy.¹⁷⁵ Furthermore, the Commonwealth was not based on any form of natural solidarity, according to Laurendeau, but rather was the result of Great Britain's imperialistic conquests.¹⁷⁶

The Bloc argued that Canada's move towards a lesser degree of involvement in the affairs of Great Britain and the Commonwealth had been halted, and in fact, reversed since the beginning of the war. Canada's war effort, most of which was carried out in conjunction with Great Britain and other Commonwealth countries, was only drawing Canada closer into the British sphere of influence.¹⁷⁷ The party felt that measures such as financial contributions by Canada, or "les dons de milliards" as they were labelled by the Bloc, only indicated Canada's subservience to the needs of the Empire.¹⁷⁸ Programs such as the Commonwealth Air Training Plan were also severely criticized by the Bloc which predicted that they would only lead to greater Commonwealth involvement. When on January 24, 1944, Lord Halifax, British Ambassador to the United States, proposed in a Toronto speech that after the war the Commonwealth countries adopt a common foreign policy, the Bloc interpreted his proposal as another attempt to maintain Canada's dependence on Great Britain:

Ce projet semble déjà en voie de réalisation: les contacts fréquents entre les autorités canadiennes et britanniques permettent d'élaborer une politique étrangère commune: des organismes impériaux, tel le conseil d'aviation, sont déjà

constitués. Peu à peu nos gouvernants, poussés par un groupe de coloniaux fanatisés par la propagande impérialiste, entraînent notre pays dans le sillage de la Grande Bretagne et menacent ainsi de détruire ce que cent-soixante ans de luttes constitutionnelles nous avaient mérité: l'indépendance.¹⁷⁹

The Bloc also objected to the fact that Canada's association with the Commonwealth involved her in geographic areas, such as Europe and Asia, which were of no vital significance to her. Although the party maintained that Canada should be active internationally, it need not be as a member of the Commonwealth. Canada's involvement outside her own geographic area should be limited, and Raymond stated emphatically that under no circumstances should Canada go to war to defend a country merely because that country was a member of the Commonwealth.¹⁸⁰

While the Bloc Populaire stressed the urgent need for reform in the area of Canada's foreign policy, the party also emphasized that reform would be ineffective without a significant change in the attitudes of Canadians themselves.¹⁸¹ As one Bloc member expressed it, Canadians lacked "un profond sentiment canadien,"¹⁸² and Canada would not realize complete independence until Canadians had learned to think of Canada as a fully autonomous, sovereign country. This could be accomplished, proposed the Bloc, through "une meilleure éducation politique" for all Canadians, which would emphasize Canada's independent status and her need to formulate policies which responded strictly to her own requirements.¹⁸³ If necessary, in order to counteract the current wave of imperialist propaganda, Canadian

authorities themselves should resort to an intelligent program of propaganda designed to "amener la majorité des citoyens de ce pays à penser en canadiens."¹⁸⁴

Once these reforms were implemented, Canada would be free to adopt a foreign policy which would correspond to two important principles of the Bloc Populaire's platform. Firstly, Canada should maintain a position of neutrality in any international crisis which did not directly threaten Canada or the interests of the country.¹⁸⁵ Maxime Raymond pointed out that this did not imply that his party wanted Canada to adopt an isolationist position. The Bloc supported an active international role for Canada --a function which she could best carry out as an independent country --but that role must be limited in proportion to Canada's capabilities and compatible with her own interests. Secondly, Canada should refuse international responsibilities imposed on her, either directly or indirectly, by another power.¹⁸⁶ While no specific mention was made, it could be inferred that Great Britain was the country to which reference was most obviously made, but the Bloc also at times deplored the strong American influence in the formulation of Canada's foreign policy.¹⁸⁷ This interference in Canada's external affairs could best be avoided through Canadian participation in a permanent international organization.¹⁸⁸ But while the Bloc supported the principle of an international organization, it qualified the type of organization in which they would recommend Canadian membership. The Bloc would support

any international organization which represented, if not all, at least the majority of all the civilized countries, and which recognized the equal rights of all members, whether large or small.¹⁸⁹ The recognition of equal rights, maintained the Bloc, would prevent such an organization from becoming dominated by "imperial powers and imperialists" as the League of Nations had been.¹⁹⁰ In addition to political concerns, the Bloc stipulated that this organization would also focus on areas of economic and social importance.

The two issues dominating the section of the federal platform dealing with matters of internal concern to Canada were provincial autonomy and the recognition of equal rights for both French and English-speaking Canadians. In the tradition of Mercier, Raymond declared provincial autonomy to be "l'épine dorsale du pays" and the Bloc Populaire convention unanimously resolved that "l'on doit exiger le respect intégral des droits constitutionnels des provinces et la restitution à celles-ci par le gouvernement central des prérogatives qui leur ont été arrachées."¹⁹¹ The Bloc's major concerns in the dispute over federal and provincial jurisdiction¹⁹² were social security legislation and the division of the powers of taxation. It argued that the initiative in the implementation of various social security measures should be reserved to provincial authorities so that the programs introduced would be designed to meet the needs of that particular region and its population.¹⁹³ Up until the present, inactivity on the part of the Quebec

government had left the field of social legislation open to intrusion by the federal authorities. The results were federally sponsored schemes such as the federal government's family allowance bill which, according to the Bloc, favored the smaller English Canadian families to the disadvantage of the larger French Canadian families.¹⁹⁴ Raymond warned that if centralizing tendencies in the federal government continued to deprive the provinces of the freedom to develop social security programs which responded to the varying needs of the population, "le Canada risque de s'affaïser sous une législation trop uniforme, sous un centralisme qui ne tient compte d'aucun particularisme géographique, économique, ou ethnique, et sous les querelles qui naissent de la rupture violente de la Confédération."¹⁹⁵

Since the provinces could only institute adequate social security programs through access to sufficient financial resources, the division of the powers of taxation became another critical issue for the Bloc Populaire. The party interpreted the British North America Act as giving sole and complete power of taxation in the area of direct taxes to the provincial government, while reserving the authority to levy indirect taxes for the federal government.¹⁹⁶ In particular the party called for exclusive provincial control of personal and corporate income taxes.¹⁹⁷ The income from these sources would then allow the government of Quebec to undertake the massive program of reforms included in the provincial platform of the Bloc Populaire. For that reason,

the Bloc considered provincial autonomy the key to social reform:

La riche demeure, c'est la province de Québec. L'autonomie provinciale, c'est la clef. Elle est un bien précieux puisqu'elle nous permettrait de rentrer chez nous sans violence et de rétablir la juste situation ... Défendre et restaurer l'autonomie provinciale afin de sauver la famille rurale et la famille urbaine, c'est-à-dire pour libérer notre société, telle est la politique du Bloc Populaire Canadien.¹⁹⁸

The Bloc labelled attempts to introduce a greater degree of centralization into the governmental structure of Canada as "revolutionary"¹⁹⁹ since these undermined the very basis of the "pacte fédératif et national" of 1867: "en 1867, nos ancêtres n'ont pas voulu un Etat unitaire, ils ont exigé une fédération des provinces."²⁰⁰ The Bloc declared that it was convinced that the Canadian constitution was based on "une entente entre deux races, la française et l'anglaise,"²⁰¹ and the Bloc Populaire convention declared further that it was of the opinion that "les provinces sont des pouvoirs constituants et le gouvernement fédéral un pouvoir constitué."²⁰²

The Bloc Populaire's demand for the recognition of equal rights for both English and French-speaking Canadians called for more than making allowances for the presence of the French language and culture in areas outside of Quebec.²⁰³ The Bloc argued that the position of French Canadians in the past had been weakened by the attitude of "bonne ententisme," since the concessions had been made primarily by French Canadians, while English Canadians continued to abuse the rapidly-disappearing good faith of their French-speaking counter-parts. The educational and language rights of French Canadian minorities

had been repeatedly trampled, while Canada as a whole had ignored the protest made by Quebec through the vote in the plebiscite on conscription.²⁰⁴ The Bloc urged the voters of Quebec that the time had come for full recognition of the rights of French Canadians in their own country:

Nous voulons encore que cesse à Ottawa ce régime d'humiliation qui contraint les Canadiens français au rôle de protestataires perpétuels pour la défense de leur langue, pour l'obtention de leur légitime part d'emplois dans l'administration, pour leur propre expression d'opinion sur les problèmes nationaux. Nous estimons d'ailleurs avoir autre chose à faire que protester éternellement.²⁰⁵

One of the first steps towards ensuring the recognition of rights for both French and English Canadians would be making Canada a fully bilingual country.²⁰⁶ However, by "fully bilingual" Raymond explained that he did not mean that every Canadian should be able to speak both the French and English languages. Rather, the Bloc desired the recognition of the constitutional right to use either of the official languages throughout Canada, not only in Parliament, but also in the federal and provincial courts and civil services.²⁰⁷ In order to be effective, the Bloc pointed out that the recognition of language rights must be both complete and practical. This also applied to the Bloc Populaire's demand for recognition in every province of the right to a Catholic and French education.²⁰⁸ Such an education, maintained the Bloc, should not merely be tolerated, but actually encouraged and facilitated by the various provincial legislatures. Again Raymond used as an example the treatment of the English Protestant minority in Quebec, who formed

eighteen percent of the population, contrasting it with the poor treatment accorded the Acadians who accounted for thirty-five percent of the population of New Brunswick.²⁰⁹

In addition to education rights, the Bloc Populaire also claimed representation proportional to the numerical importance of French Canadians on commissions established by the federal government and in the federal civil service.²¹⁰ This representation should be proportional not only in the number of positions, but also in salary and rank. Raymond illustrated the Bloc's claim of injustice to French Canadians in this area by pointing out that French Canadians, while forming nearly thirty percent of Canada's population, occupied only eleven and one-half percent of high-ranking civil service positions.²¹¹ In spite of this inequality, the federal government frequently persisted in assigning to Quebec civil servants who spoke English only. This same discrimination was evident in the awarding of public contracts, the Bloc claimed, and the party called for equal treatment of both French and English firms.²¹²

And finally, the federal platform of the Bloc Populaire dealt rather briefly with some social and economic issues coming under federal jurisdiction. Here, as in the provincial platform, the Bloc based its reform on the premise that concern for the individual and the family must take precedence over strictly monetary interests.²¹³ This principle formed the basis for the party's proposed reform of the credit and monetary system, of the Bank of Canada and of chartered banks, so that "l'argent

et ceux qui le dispensent soient réduits à leurs rôles de serviteurs du peuple canadien."²¹⁴ The exact reforms envisaged by the Bloc were not specified. Again making no specific recommendation, the Bloc called for tax reform which would ease the burden on large families,²¹⁵ and proposed that the age of eligibility for old age pensions be lowered.²¹⁶ The concern for workers shown in the provincial platform was evident again in the party's proposal to revise the laws regulating corporations to give the paying of fair and equitable salaries priority over the issuance of dividends, and to require that members of boards of directors take more responsibility for the actions of their companies.²¹⁷ In federal as well as provincial issues, the Bloc Populaire promised to help the worker, the small investor, and the small businessman, while carrying on the fight to eliminate the "economic dictatorship" of the trusts.

This discussion of the platform of the Bloc Populaire Canadien clearly indicates that the Bloc was in every way a continuation of the nationalist tradition which had produced it. The social and economic reforms which the Bloc proposed in the provincial section of its platform clearly bore the stamp of the Programme de Restauration Sociale published by the Ecole Sociale Populaire in 1933. The federal platform of the Bloc Populaire, with its strong emphasis on Canadian independence, provincial autonomy, and equal rights for French and English-speaking Canadians, was unmistakably Bourassian in inspiration. Both influences were combined in the platform of the Bloc Populaire

to produce a document based on, and designed to defend, the national interests of French Canada.

The nationalist influence is evident in almost every aspect of the provincial section of the Bloc platform. Of particular significance is the Bloc's endorsement of three concepts basic to the nationalist ideology: the importance of the family as a social unit in French Canadian society, Roman Catholicism and its influence on social thought, and la survivance. The Bloc chose the family as the focus of its provincial programme. Most of the specific reforms in this section were designed to strengthen the position of the family in society, and the Bloc Populaire denounced those influences of industrialization and urbanization which threatened the unity of the foyer. The influence of Roman Catholicism on the formation of the Bloc ideology was also of major importance. The social and economic reforms proposed by the Bloc were formulated to produce a social order based on Christian principles. The definitions of the relationship between the individual and the state, and of the role of the state in the economy were derived from the Papal encyclicals, Rerum Novarum and Quadragesimo Anno. Finally, the Bloc wholly committed itself to the encouragement of the survival of French Canada. The platform of the Bloc Populaire was written solely for French Canadians, and was designed to give them control of their province and to place them on an equal footing with English-speaking Canadians in the country as a whole. It thoroughly encouraged the cultural

awareness of French Canada as a distinct identity and emphasized, particularly among the young, the mission de la terre.

In accordance with the Papal encyclicals on which it was based, the Bloc programme accepted the private enterprise system, although proposing to eliminate the abuses in it, particularly the unequal distribution of wealth. It completely rejected both socialism and communism, encouraging instead individual initiative and liberty. However, individual freedom was to be encouraged only when it did not interfere with the higher interests of the French Canadian collectivity. The role of the state was merely to provide direction, and ultimately the Bloc proposed that this direction be provided by the institution of professional corporatism. Corporatism again was a traditional response to the problems of industrialization and urbanization proposed by the Programme de Restauration Sociale and also accepted by the Action Libérale Nationale in 1934. Like the A.L.N. and the Ecole Sociale Populaire, the Bloc offered no concrete plan for the implementation of this complex and highly theoretical system.

Again characteristic of the tradition in which it developed, the Bloc continued to subscribe to the agrarian myth, idealizing the rural way of life. However, while the Bloc encouraged the revival of the agricultural industry through programmes such as colonization, rural electrification, and the support of co-operatives and secondary industries, unlike the A.L.N., the Bloc no longer looked to a revival of agriculture

as the key to solving Quebec's problems. The platform of the Bloc Populaire reveals a far greater acceptance of the urbanization of Quebec. While the Bloc did not approve of industrialization and rapid urban growth, it accepted the challenge of its problems. Many of its proposals in the areas of slum clearance, housing, and urban planning were radical in the context of the 1940's.

The proposals of the federal platform of the Bloc Populaire reveal the strong influence of the ideas of Henri Bourassa. Its three main tenets, the independence of Canada, provincial autonomy, and equality of rights for French and English-speaking Canadians, belong to the nationalist tradition established by Bourassa and continued by the Action Française and later by the Action Nationale. The vigorous opposition to Canadian involvement in the war, which was also a major aspect of the Bloc's federal platform, was, in part, a response to the situation in which French Canadians were placed during World War II. However, it was also the reflection of a long-standing aversion of French Canadians to participation in any European or British war, a tradition which began with Bourassa's opposition to the sending of Canadian troops to the Boer War in 1899 and was intensified by the conscription crisis of World War I.

Many of the demands of the Bloc Populaire in areas of domestic concern reflected very real inequalities which existed between French and English Canada. Many of their proposals in the areas of bilingualism and biculturalism, such as equality

of language rights, the use of French within the Federal government, and a proportionate representation of French Canadians in the federal public service were progressive and only now are receiving serious consideration. Their demands for a distinctive Canadian flag and for the adoption of "O Canada" as the Canadian national anthem have already been realized.

The Bloc Populaire platform was completed by the adoption of the resolutions presented at the Bloc convention in February 1944. In the areas of federal and provincial concern, the programme presented by the Bloc Populaire was both comprehensive and extensive, offering a wide range of reforms which would affect all segments of the population. The way in which this platform was presented to the electorate, and the way it was, in turn, received by the voters, will be discussed in the following chapters on the activities of the Bloc Populaire in the provincial election of 1944 and the federal election of 1945.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER IV

¹Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6.

²These radio broadcasts were later published in the form of two pamphlets: Programme fédéral du Bloc (Montréal: Imprimerie Populaire, n.d.) and Programme provincial du Bloc (Montreal: Imprimerie Populaire, n.d.). (Hereafter cited as Programme fédéral and Programme provincial, respectively).

³The resolutions passed by the convention of the Bloc Populaire were printed in Le Bloc in three issues: February 19, 1944; February 26, 1944; and March 4, 1944.

⁴Programme provincial du Bloc, p. 2.

⁵Le Devoir, April 11, 1944, p. 8.

⁶Politique agricole et ouvrière du Bloc Populaire Canadien (Montréal: Imprimerie Populaire, n.d.), p. 4. (Hereafter cited as Politique agricole et ouvrière).

⁷Collectivité is usually used to refer to French Canadians as a national group, and is used here in English in the same sense.

⁸Programme provincial, p. 2.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰Politique agricole et ouvrière, p. 5.

¹¹Programme provincial, p. 2.

¹²Ibid.

¹³Le Bloc, February 12, 1944, p. 2.

¹⁴Le Bloc, October 14, 1944, p. 7.

¹⁵Ibid.

¹⁶Politique agricole et ouvrière, p. 9.

¹⁷Ibid.

¹⁸Le Bloc, October 14, 1944, p. 7.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Programme provincial, p. 7.

²²Ibid., p. 8.

²³Ibid.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷Ibid., p. 7.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Ibid.

³²Le Bloc, February 26, 1944, p. 7.

³³Programme provincial, p. 7.

³⁴Blair Fraser, "What Does the Bloc Populaire Stand For?"
Maclean's Magazine, January 1, 1944, p. 10.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Le Bloc, April 11, 1944, p. 4.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Fraser, op. cit., p. 10.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Le Bloc, April 4, 1945, p. 10.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Fraser, op. cit., p. 10.

⁴³Le Bloc, April 11, 1945, p. 4.

⁴⁴Le Bloc, April 4, 1945, p. 4.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Le Bloc, April 11, 1945, p. 4.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Programme provincial, p. 7.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Le Devoir, March 13, 1944, p. 6.

⁵¹Le Bloc, April 14, 1945, p. 4.

⁵²Ibid.

⁵³Programme provincial, p. 8.

⁵⁴Le Bloc, April 11, 1945, p. 4.

⁵⁵Programme provincial, p. 8.

⁵⁶Ibid., p. 5.

⁵⁷Le Bloc, April 11, 1945, p. 4.

⁵⁸Programme provincial, p. 9.

⁵⁹Ibid.

⁶⁰Le Bloc, April 11, 1945, p. 4.

⁶¹Programme provincial, p. 9.

⁶²Ibid.

⁶³Ibid.

⁶⁴Le Bloc, April 8, 1944, p. 2.

⁶⁵Le Devoir, March 13, 1944, p. 6.

⁶⁶Programme provincial, p. 9.

⁶⁷Ibid.

⁶⁸Ibid.

⁶⁹Le Bloc, February 26, 1944, p. 7.

⁷⁰Programme provincial, p. 11.

⁷¹Le Bloc, February 26, 1944, p. 7.

⁷²Politique agricole et ouvrière, p. 9.

⁷³Programme provincial, p. 4.

⁷⁴Ibid.

⁷⁵Ibid., p. 12.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Ibid. The federal plan of family allowances was not announced until the speech from the Throne in January 1944.

⁷⁸Ibid., p. 4.

⁷⁹Ibid.

⁸⁰Ibid., p. 5.

⁸¹Ibid.

⁸²Ibid., p. 12.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Le Bloc, April 22, 1944, p. 7.

⁸⁵Ibid.

⁸⁶Ibid.

⁸⁷Le Bloc, February 26, 1944, p. 7.

⁸⁸Ibid.

⁸⁹Programme provincial, p. 14.

⁹⁰Ibid., p. 12.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Ibid.

⁹³Ibid.

⁹⁴Ibid.

⁹⁵Ibid.

⁹⁶Ibid., p. 13.

⁹⁷Ibid.

- ⁹⁸Ibid.
- ⁹⁹Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁰Le Devoir, October 12, 1943, p. 6.
- ¹⁰¹Le Bloc, February 26, 1944, p. 7.
- ¹⁰²Fraser, op. cit., p. 35.
- ¹⁰³Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁴Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁵Programme provincial, pp. 12-13.
- ¹⁰⁶Ibid., p. 12.
- ¹⁰⁷Ibid., p. 13.
- ¹⁰⁸Ibid.
- ¹⁰⁹Ibid.
- ¹¹⁰Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6.
- ¹¹¹Le Bloc, April 11, 1945, p. 4.
- ¹¹²Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6.
- ¹¹³Programme provincial, p. 10.
- ¹¹⁴Ibid.
- ¹¹⁵Ibid.
- ¹¹⁶Ibid.
- ¹¹⁷Ibid., p. 11.
- ¹¹⁸Ibid., p. 10.
- ¹¹⁹Ibid.
- ¹²⁰Ibid.
- ¹²¹Ibid.
- ¹²²Ibid.
- ¹²³Ibid.

- 124 Ibid.
- 125 Fraser, op. cit., p. 35.
- 126 Programme provincial, p. 13.
- 127 Ibid.
- 128 Ibid., p. 14.
- 129 Ibid.
- 130 Ibid.
- 131 Ibid.
- 132 Ibid.
- 133 Ibid.
- 134 Programme fédéral, pp, 4-5.
- 135 Le Bloc, April 4, 1945, p. 3.
- 136 Le Bloc, April 11, 1945, p. 3.
- 137 Le Bloc, February 12, 1944, p. 2.
- 138 Programme fédéral, p. 3.
- 139 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.
- 140 Fraser, op. cit., p. 36.
- 141 Le Bloc, February 19, 1942, p. 7.
- 142 Programme fédéral, p. 5.
- 143 Le Bloc, March 1, 1945, p. 11.
- 144 Programme fédéral, p. 5.
- 145 Ibid.
- 146 Fraser, op. cit., p. 9.
- 147 Ibid.
- 148 Programme fédéral, p. 6.
- 149 Ibid.

150 Ibid.

151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

153 Ibid.

154 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.

155 Fraser, op. cit., p. 35.

156 Programme fédéral, p. 7.

157 Le Bloc, March 22, 1945, p. 11.

158 Ibid.

159 Programme fédéral, p. 7.

160 Ibid.

161 Le Bloc, March 4, 1944, p. 3.

162 Le Bloc, March 22, 1945, p. 3.

163 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.

164 Programme fédéral, p. 7.

165 Ibid.

166 Le Bloc, March 18, 1944, p. 1.

167 Programme fédéral, p. 7.

168 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.

169 Ibid.

170 Le Bloc, February, 1944, p. 3.

171 Ibid.

172 Ibid.

173 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 3. The members of the Bloc Populaire could voice even harsher criticisms of the role which they felt the United States played in the political destiny of South America. For example, Canada should act "non certes dans un but d'agression, mais dans un but de défense, de façon à empêcher la finance judéo-américaine de formenter des

révolutions quand bon lui semble dans les petites républiques de l'Amérique du Sud, pour empêcher les financiers américains de faire l'élection des présidents du Mexique, de Colombie, du Venezuela et d'ailleurs."

174 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.

175 Le Devoir, February 7, 1944, p. 2.

176 Ibid.

177 Fraser, op. cit., p. 8.

178 Ibid.

179 Le Bloc, March 1, 1945, p. 11.

180 Fraser, op. cit., p. 8.

181 Programme fédéral, p. 5.

182 Le Bloc, May 11, 1945, p. 3.

183 Programme fédéral, p. 5.

184 Le Bloc, May 11, 1945, p. 3.

185 Programme fédéral, p. 8.

186 Ibid.

187 Le Bloc, February 12, 1944, p. 3. "N'est-il pas prétentieux de parler de politique internationale au sujet du Canada?" Le Bloc inquired. "Jusqu'ici cette politique a surtout brillé par son absence et notre pays s'est distingué par l'abandon total de sa personnalité, tantôt aux mains de Londres, tantôt aux mains de Washington."

188 Programme fédéral, p. 8.

189 Ibid.

190 Le Bloc, January 25, 1945, p. 8.

191 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.

192 Le Bloc, March 18, 1944, p. 4.

193 Le Bloc, February 12, 1944, p. 4.

194 Ibid.

- 195 Programme fédéral, p. 9.
- 196 Le Bloc, March 18, 1944, p. 4.
- 197 Ibid.
- 198 Programme provincial, p. 6.
- 199 Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6.
- 200 Programme fédéral, p. 5.
- 201 Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6.
- 202 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.
- 203 Ibid.
- 204 Programme fédéral, p.10.
- 205 Le Devoir, October 12, 1942, p. 6.
- 206 Fraser, op. cit., p. 9.
- 207 Ibid.
- 208 Le Bloc, February 19, 1944, p. 7.
- 209 Programme fédéral, p. 10.
- 210 Ibid., p. 9.
- 211 Ibid., p. 10.
- 212 Ibid., p. 9.
- 213 Ibid., p. 11.
- 214 Ibid.
- 215 Ibid.
- 216 Ibid., p. 12.
- 217 Ibid., p. 11.

CHAPTER V

THE BLOC POPULAIRE IN THE 1944 PROVINCIAL ELECTION

Once the February convention was successfully completed, the Bloc Populaire turned its attention to preparations for the provincial general election expected in the spring or summer of 1944. Although the election date of 8 August was not announced until late in June, the Bloc began campaigning as early as mid-February. However, this initial campaigning was carried on primarily by the party leadership and the groundwork of the campaign -- the formation of constituency organizations and the nomination of candidates -- proceeded much more slowly. In spite of the limited experience, organization, and financial resources of the party, the Bloc Populaire waged an aggressive campaign and, as election day approached, grew increasingly optimistic about its chances for success. However, this optimism proved to be completely illusory when, on 8 August, the Bloc elected only four candidates to the Legislative Assembly, a total far below its expectations. Although the poor showing by the Bloc prompted predictions of the disintegration of the party, the Bloc Populaire refused to admit defeat.

The February convention and the enthusiasm and publicity

it generated strongly encouraged the Bloc Populaire, and, in spite of the unfavourable publicity created by the public debate over the conflict between Raymond and the trio, faced with determination the task of preparing for the approaching provincial election. The convention had provided an opportunity for the party membership to discuss the problems with which they would have to contend and to plan the electoral strategy which they would follow.¹ As a result of action taken at the convention, the provincial section of the party now had its own leader, and, while the youthfulness of the new "chef provincial" was looked on as a hindrance by some, André Laurendeau offered the Bloc Populaire enthusiastic and energetic leadership for the upcoming contest. This solved a vexing problem for the party, for, while Maxime Raymond had resumed his political activities, it was still doubtful if his weak health could withstand a rigorous provincial campaign.² However, Laurendeau's acceptance of the leadership also intensified dissatisfaction in certain areas. While the decision had been received enthusiastically by the convention delegates, it caused particular dissatisfaction with Edouard Lacroix, whose co-operation was important to the party because of his financial commitments to it. As a result, shortly after the convention Lacroix requested a release from Raymond from any agreement committing Lacroix to financial support of the Bloc Populaire on the grounds that their agreement had been broken by Raymond's "abdication" of the provincial field.³ While the misunderstanding did not cause Lacroix to leave the

party, he remained dissatisfied and limited his activities with the Bloc from that time on.⁴

The convention also marked the founding of the party's own newspaper, Le Bloc, published weekly in Montreal with first André Laurendeau and later Victor Trépanier as editor.⁵ The first issue, although dated 12 February, was printed to be circulated at the Bloc convention, at which time a campaign was launched to sell subscriptions for the new paper. As a weekly publication, Le Bloc concentrated more on an examination of topics of current interest rather than on news items, and provided the party with an excellent opportunity to present its views on a wide range of political, social, economic, or cultural issues. Some news stories were highlighted and regular columns soon appeared discussing developments in areas such as international affairs and provincial and federal politics. An interesting column first appeared on 25 March and was entitled "Femme et Patrie," and was directed towards the feminine reader. "Femme et Patrie" discussed primarily the women's newly acquired responsibility of voting and concentrated on issues considered to be of particular feminine interest such as housing and health standards. In addition, Le Bloc also covered the campaign activities of the party, introduced its candidates, and presented various aspects of the Bloc Populaire platform. While a definite asset to the party, Le Bloc seemed to attain only a limited circulation and suffered chronic financial difficulties.⁶

The Bloc Populaire relied heavily on the radio and

newspaper as means of publicizing its campaign. On the radio the party continued its weekly review of the political events in "la Chronique Politique", although after February Jean Drapeau relieved André Laurendeau as the regular commentator. This series was supplemented by weekly and later bi-weekly radio broadcasts by various members of the party. These broadcasts in particular allowed the Bloc to present to a wide segment of the electorate many of the party's less known members. The number of voters exposed to these speeches was increased by Le Devoir, which either reprinted or commented on all of the Bloc Populaire's radio broadcasts. The newspaper also continued its favorable coverage of the other activities of the Bloc, although the party received little by way of favorable comment from any other of the province's more widely circulated dailies.⁷

The establishment of local Bloc organizations and the nomination of candidates was one of the largest tasks facing the Bloc Populaire that spring. The basic structure of the provincial organization was already formed. The ninety-one provincial constituencies had been divided into the districts of Montreal and Quebec, each under a regional organizer -- Philippe Girard for the Montreal district, and Dr. Pierre Gauthier, federal member for Portneuf, for the Quebec district. The Montreal district, the larger of the two with fifty-six constituencies, also seemed to be characterized by a more energetic organization, probably due in part to the fact that the central organization and both leaders were located in Montreal. The district of Quebec seemed more prone, from the first weeks of the

party's existence, to the internal conflicts and disagreements which weakened the party's effectiveness. The influence of Philippe Hamel was strong in the area of Quebec City and he retained a considerable amount of sympathy and support after his break from the Bloc. There was also a group of former Action Libérale Nationale members such as Marie-Louis Beaulieu, who did not follow Gouin and Hamel when they broke with the party, yet remained somewhat estranged from the activities of Pierre Gauthier and the district organization.⁸ Both districts were faced with the problem of limited financial resources and a relatively short time in which to establish some sort of province-wide organization which would have to compete with the well established, more amply financed, and more experienced party structures of the Liberals and Union Nationale. The Bloc Populaire seems to have accomplished very little by way of concrete organization in areas outside the urban centers of Montreal and Quebec City prior to the convention in February that year.⁹ A tremendous amount of work faced the Bloc organizers, many of them young with limited or no previous political experience.

The initiative in the establishment of local committees was frequently taken by the central organization. Common procedure was for a delegation of Bloc activists lead by Philippe Girard, or in the Quebec district, by Pierre Gauthier, to visit a locality for a public meeting. However, the local group retained complete independence and was free to form its own committee, organize its own style of campaign, and choose its

own candidate.¹⁰ A local organizer was frequently elected at this first meeting and names accepted of those interested in participating in committees. One of the first of such organizational meetings took place at Drummondville on 20 February,¹¹ but they were not held with any real frequency until the end of March and throughout April and May, when the list of new local organizations multiplied in Le Bloc. The first Bloc candidate to be nominated would appear to be Omer Journeault, mayor of La Tuque and provincial candidate in Laviolette, who was nominated some time prior to 22 April.¹² However, the bulk of nominations took place in June and many late into July, while the last report of a nomination for the Bloc Populaire appeared in the July thirty-first edition of Le Devoir.¹³

In comparison with the other two major parties, the nominations of Bloc Populaire candidates seemed to progress more slowly. Le Devoir reported that by July fourth the Union Nationale had chosen forty-three candidates,¹⁴ whereas by the fifth, the Bloc Populaire reported only twelve nominated candidates with four nominating meetings to be held that evening.¹⁵ The eighth, the same newspaper printed a list of forty-two candidates which had been nominated by the Liberal party.¹⁶ However, the Bloc Populaire contested only eighty of the ninety-one possible seats, whereas the Liberals and Union Nationale both ran full slates.

The campaign of the Bloc Populaire was also restricted by the party's limited financial resources. A subscription campaign, or a "vente des timbres", had been launched the

previous year, although according to Marie-Louis Beaulieu it had not been conducted too energetically and the results had not been too encouraging.¹⁷ However, in April of 1944, according to a statement by the Bloc Populaire, public response through donations had been substantial enough to form an independent finance committee.¹⁸ An element of propaganda can be detected in this explanation, however, and there is no evidence to indicate any overwhelming public response to the party's request for campaign funds. The primary source of funds for the Bloc was Maxime Raymond himself, particularly for the Montreal region, and it was at first understood that Edouard Lacroix would finance the activities of the Quebec region. However, by the time the provincial campaign was under way, Lacroix's relations with the Bloc Populaire were considerably strained. His displeasure over the appointment of André Laurendeau as provincial leader of the Bloc did not disappear quickly and in May he repeated his request to Raymond that he be released from any financial obligations towards the party, as well as any campaign responsibilities should an election be called during the early part of the summer.¹⁹ There were also rumors that Lacroix had broken with the Bloc Populaire completely²⁰ and, although he ran as a Bloc candidate, his campaign was conducted somewhat independently from that of the rest of the party. Under these circumstances it is likely that Lacroix's contributions to the party coffers were not generous, if offered at all.

The money at the disposal of the Bloc Populaire was used

primarily at the level of the central and district organizations. Some money was provided to cover candidates' deposits,²¹ but expenses at the local level were assumed by the local organization or the candidate himself.²²

The campaign of the Bloc Populaire did not gain full momentum until late spring, but as early as February the party adopted an aggressive attitude towards the opposition parties. During a radio broadcast on 14 February André Laurendeau clearly indicated that his party intended to launch a vigorous provincial campaign. He rejected, once and for all, any suggestion that the Bloc Populaire limit its political activities to the federal field.²³ In an emphatic rebuttal to those who claimed that the participation of the Bloc Populaire provincially would only serve to split the nationalist vote between the Union Nationale and itself, Laurendeau argued that "simultaneous action" by the party both federally and provincially was essential. Too frequently the efforts of the federal representatives to defend Quebec's interests at Ottawa were undermined by a lack of strong support from the provincial government. To prevent such a failure in collaboration, the Bloc believed that the same party should speak for French Canada both provincially and federally:

Cela n'est pas un problème d'électoralisme ou d'opposition; il s'agit d'un principe fondamental, d'une idée de base, dont rien ne saurait nous éloigner. Nous sommes dans la lutte provinciale pour y rester.²⁴

Emphasizing a theme which would later dominate the Bloc campaign, Laurendeau stated that the aim of the party was to free the province from its two most powerful enemies -- economic and

military imperialism, and the economic dictatorship of the trusts. Its resolve to destroy the power of the trusts made the Bloc Populaire particularly determined to win office provincially, since only by forming the government in Quebec would it have the power to legislate changes in areas of social and economic concern. The people of Quebec, he argued, were tired of voting for "le moindre mal" and were ready for a definite alternative to the traditional parties. In its determination to provide new and vigorous leadership for the province, the Bloc would challenge both the Liberal and Union Nationale parties:

Le Bloc luttera à Québec contre les vieux partis. Il ne conclura pas d'entente. Ni alliance ni entente avec quelque vieux parti que ce soit; une lutte sans équivoque, une lutte sans merci contre des équipes impuissantes, dont l'une a bien essayé de se renouveler en changeant de nom, mais qui restent toutes les deux asservies au trust de l'argent, et qui n'ont d'autre doctrine que la doctrine vieillote des égoïsmes de parti.²⁵

Therefore, in spite of Duplessis' preoccupation with provincial autonomy and the claims of the Union Nationale to represent nationalist ideas, the Bloc would make no distinction in its campaign between the Union Nationale and Liberal parties.

A few weeks later Jean Martineau further defined the attitude of the Bloc Populaire towards Duplessis and the Union Nationale. According to Martineau, Duplessis represented a greater danger for Quebec than did the Liberal party, because " ... il lui sera peut-être plus facile de vous tromper; ... parce qu'il semble parfois parler votre langue; ... parce qu'hypocritement il prétend se faire le champion de vos justes griefs."²⁶ The voters should not forget that Duplessis had betrayed the

people of Quebec in 1936 and that all he could now offer them was a political past "rempli de volte-face, d'opportunismes, de lâchetés, de trahisons, et de farces."²⁷ Not only had Duplessis' promises to oppose the trusts been discarded once the Union Nationale gained power, but he had failed completely to protect the interests of French Canadians by refusing to oppose conscription.

Having declared its resolve to enter the provincial field, the Bloc Populaire began to develop the basis for its campaign. During this early period André Laurendeau first concentrated on explaining the philosophy and aims of the party in the provincial context. His speech of 14 February was followed by another two weeks later which again emphasized his party's concern with provincial issues and which sketched, in general terms, the philosophy of the Bloc Populaire. The Bloc Populaire differed from the other parties, he maintained, because it was guided by a coherent and vital doctrine---a doctrine based on Christian principles and a just social and economic order.²⁸ Lamenting the situation of the family and agricultural vocation in Quebec, Laurendeau declared that it was scandalous that two institutions so important to the French Canadian way of life could be so neglected in a province where French Canadians constituted the majority of the population. However, Laurendeau could foresee an even worse scandal,

... si les catholiques se montraient impuissants à faire sortir leur province de cette misère, ou s'ils attendaient que les étrangers à leur pensée, étrangers à leur philosophie de la vie, à leur sociologie, vinssent les tirer de leur

esclavage, leur montrer comment on rebatît un pays, comment on y restaure le règne de l'ordre et de la justice.²⁹

Laurendeau concluded by issuing a challenge to French Canadians to assume the control of their political institutions granted them by Confederation. Only by doing so could they be free to adopt policies responding to their particular national needs. The Bloc Populaire, because of its "politique familiale" and the priority given to the interests of the province, offered the people of Quebec just such an "idéal politique et national."³⁰

During the first rallies which he addressed as provincial leader of the Bloc Populaire, Laurendeau directed attention to various aspects of the party's provincial platform. Speaking before a Montreal audience on 12 March he emphasized the importance placed by the Bloc on the role of the family in French Canadian society and outlined some of the reforms proposed by his party to improve the living conditions of families in Quebec.³¹ He specifically promised immediate action on the elimination of slum areas and the construction, in their place, of clean and well designed, family-sized dwellings. Other priorities of the Bloc Populaire, such as an improved educational system with more emphasis on technical schools, higher salaries for the workers, and family allowances would also contribute to a higher standard of living for the province. Laurendeau also attacked the economic system which victimized both producer and consumer, forcing farmers to sell their produce at prices which barely covered production costs, yet selling these same products

to the consumer at greatly inflated values.³² Similarly, a week later while speaking to audiences at Saint Jérôme and in the Rosemont district of Montreal, the Bloc leader again dealt with the reforms proposed by his party in the provincial field, stressing in particular how these measures would strengthen and assist the family.³³

While the party later continued to direct attention to the wide range of topics discussed in its programme, the Bloc did not focus its campaign on the provincial platform as such. Topics such as family allowances, housing reform, labour legislation, and agricultural credit were frequently discussed, but they did not receive the greatest emphasis. Even during these first stages of campaigning two issues emerged which continued to dominate the speeches of the Bloc candidates and party activists: the need for economic reform and the Bloc's opposition to Canadian participation in the war, particularly through conscription.

The Bloc's campaign for economic reform was an important aspect of its provincial platform and took the form of a vigorous attack on "la dictature économique." During a radio broadcast devoted solely to that topic on 12 March, André Laurendeau defined what his party meant by the "economic dictatorship" of Quebec. It was a small, interdependent group of financial interests, he explained, part of a plutocracy of fifty or so financiers across Canada, frequently representatives of international trusts, who, through their activities on various

boards of directors of different companies, dominated the country's economic activities.³⁴ These men were the real government, Laurendeau maintained, and each disposed of more real political influence than any ten representatives in any Canadian legislature. Because these "magnats de finance" were interested only in their own dividends and profits, the ordinary people, particularly in Quebec, had been unable to attain a satisfactory standard of living.³⁵ The governments of the past, Laurendeau continued, had done nothing to control this dictatorship and had even encouraged it. In Quebec, the governments of S.N. Parent, Lomer Gouin, and Alexandre Taschereau had surrendered most of the provinces natural resources to these financiers in order to attract industry to Quebec. As a result, "on a condamné tout un peuple au prolétariat perpétuel et au prolétariat le plus mal payé de l'Amérique après la race noire."³⁶ The province had been on the brink of emancipation in 1935 with the rise of the Action Libérale Nationale-Union Nationale coalition, but the leadership of Maurice Duplessis had proven a cruel deception. Since 1939, the conditions created by the war and Godbout's leniency towards economic centralization had permitted the controlling companies to expand and strengthen their dictatorship. Laurendeau concluded:

Ce que nous voulons, ce n'est pas de remplacer des exploiters anglo-canadiens par des exploiters canadiens-français; mais c'est de mettre fin à toute exploitation. C'est contre la dictature économique avant tout que le Bloc est entré en guerre dans l'arène provinciale et cette guerre, il entend la mener jusqu'au bout.³⁷

Two weeks later on 26 March the provincial leader

continued the topic by describing the methods which would be employed by the Bloc Populaire in its "war" against the trusts. The essential aim was to destroy this economic dictatorship without turning to the other extreme of socialism or "la dictature de l'Etat bureaucratique et socialiste."³⁸ Generally, the Bloc would attempt to realize a more equitable distribution of wealth by eliminating the injustices in the tax and corporation structures which had allowed large amounts of capital to become concentrated among a few individuals. French Canadian initiatives in business would be encouraged through the extensive application of the co-operative principle in a wide range of industries.³⁹ In this way, monopolies in certain industries, such as the manufacture of farm implements and the processing of primary foodstuffs (bread, milk, meat) could be eliminated without direct intervention by the state. Although the Bloc Populaire believed that industry should remain under the control of private enterprise, Laurendeau warned that it would act to prevent the formation of cartels and monopolies.⁴⁰ Until the economy could become self-regulating through the formation of an encompassing corporative structure, the Bloc proposed independent commissions to control any abuses within the industrial sector and, in instances of extreme abuse, the party would have recourse to the nationalization of private interests. Referring to the Bloc Populaire platform, he noted that several instances where nationalization would be proposed had already been designated: telephone services; natural gas; the importing of coal, gasoline, and oils; and, most obviously,

the hydro-electrical industry in Quebec.⁴¹

The problem of how to deal with this "economic dictatorship" became the topic of a series of lectures given by André Laurendeau at the end of March in the Eastern Townships. Although the lectures, entitled "Comment nous libérer des chaînes de la dictature économique", were described as of a non-political nature, the content was almost identical to that of the speeches which Laurendeau had just given on the radio.⁴² However, rather than speaking as a representative of the Bloc Populaire, Laurendeau was sponsored by nationalist organizations such as local Saint Jean-Baptiste Societies and the Jeunes Laurentiens.⁴³ During the five day speaking tour, Laurendeau denounced the "trustards" before audiences in Victoriaville, Drummondville, Asbestos, Magog, Sherbrooke, and Coaticook. These cities were industrial centers characterized by small industries, low wages, and a low standard of living, an ideal area to present demands for industrial and economic reform. So while the lecture tour was technically not part of the Bloc campaign, it was an excellent opportunity for its new provincial leader to present the party's ideas with the apparent approbation of various nationalist societies.

The fact that conscription and Canadian participation in the war were really questions more relevant to federal jurisdiction than provincial did not deter the Bloc from making them an integral part of their campaign. The Bloc described its position as opposition to "economic and military imperialism"

and protested that its attack was not directed against a particular country, such as Great Britain, but rather against imperialism and war in general. The Bloc denounced the war policies of the Mackenzie King government and indicted the provincial Liberals for their complicity in them. Even the Union Nationale did not escape attack, as the nationalists accused it of neglecting interests of vital importance to French Canadians when it failed to offer a vigorous opposition to conscription. The attitude which the Bloc Populaire would take was clearly outlined by André Laurendeau in mid-April, when he denounced the position taken by both the Liberals and the Union Nationale in relation to the war issue.⁴⁴ According to the Bloc leader, Duplessis' record had been one of hesitation, equivocation, and side-stepping. Before the declaration of war in 1939, when confronted by a group of students and workers concerned about future Canadian policy, Duplessis refused to take any action which might have opposed Canadian participation. Like Pontius Pilate, Laurendeau accused, Duplessis had washed his hands of any involvement on the pretext that the problem of participation in the war came under federal jurisdiction.⁴⁵ Once war was declared the Union Nationale leader maintained "un silence criminel" on the issue. Laurendeau charged that during the 1939 Quebec election Duplessis had hedged on his position, declaring either support or opposition to participation according to the electoral advantage each position would bring.⁴⁶ Finally, the Bloc leader condemned Duplessis' hesitation during the 1942

plebiscite campaign, accusing him of remaining silent until he knew the direction of public opinion and only then, just three days before the vote, declaring his opposition.

The culpability of the leader of the provincial Liberals was equally evident. Laurendeau first recalled the promise made by Godbout during the 1939 election campaign that he would resign if a single Canadian were mobilized against his will.⁴⁷ Yet, Laurendeau pointed out, Godbout had not campaigned for a negative response to the plebiscite, nor had he protested the passing of Bill 80 which had cleared the way for the application of conscription. For four years, Laurendeau accused, Godbout had emphasized the importance of the war and had repeatedly sacrificed provincial autonomy in acquiescence to war policies of the federal Liberals. Godbout's servitude to Mackenzie King had developed to such an extreme that "M. Godbout nous a prévenus qu'il serait prêt à cirer les bottes de nos soldats, si seulement M. King le lui demandait."⁴⁸ Rejecting any suggestion that these were federal issues and therefore not relevant to a provincial election, Laurendeau clearly stated his party's intention:

Oui, la guerre a dominé la politique provinciale, et rien ne nous cachera cette vérité, rien ne fera dévier notre offensive.⁴⁹

The Bloc's emphasis on these two key issues -- its fight against the economic dictatorship and its opposition to economic and military imperialism -- increased as the campaign progressed and other issues assumed secondary importance. André

Laurendeau particularly concentrated on these two topics in his tours throughout the province, while other topics received greater coverage from the other candidates and speakers. This, of course, allowed candidates to emphasize those aspects of the Bloc platform most relevant to their particular area.

The Bloc Populaire campaign also relied on certain controversial news issues which the party exploited most effectively. The first broke in March when Maxime Raymond questioned in the House of Commons whether any workers of the Bouchard plant of Defence Industries Limited near Sainte-Thérèse, Quebec had been discharged to provide vacancies for workers transferred there from that company's plant at Nobel, Ontario. He later suggested that certain of these transfers had been requested by the National Selective Service Commission and paid for by the government.⁵⁰ Claiming that Defence Industries was a crown corporation which operated primarily on government contracts, Raymond demanded that the federal government investigate and rectify any injustices which had occurred. The King government, after some delay, denied that Defence Industries was a crown corporation, but stated that it was a private company over which the government had no control.⁵¹ It also denied that any workers had been transferred to Quebec from outside the province at government expense.⁵² Nevertheless, during the time it took the government reply to materialize, the Bloc Populaire derived considerable profit from the incident as a political issue, denouncing this "scandale national" in

its speeches and newspaper, and even presenting a former foreman from the Bouchard plant to support its charges and to urge workers to vote for the Bloc Populaire.⁵³ Another issue widely publicized by the Bloc was the housing shortage in the province. Predicting a major housing crisis in Quebec, particularly in Montreal, come the first of May, André Laurendeau denounced the ineffectiveness of the Wartime Housing Corporation, laying most of the blame on the federal government which had subordinated all other concerns to its war effort.⁵⁴ War industries had caused "anarchic congestion" in the cities, a situation with which provincial governments, because of the loss of their authority to Ottawa, were unable to cope. The Bloc's demand for "maisons avant des canons"⁵⁵ also lost its effectiveness when the first of May passed without the drastic housing shortage which it had predicted. However, the inadequacy of housing facilities in Quebec continued to be a popular topic with the Bloc Populaire.

The issue which became a really important part of the Bloc campaign right through until August, was the May seventh shooting by R.C.M.P. officers of a young deserter named Georges Guénette. Guénette had been sought by police for some weeks on suspicion of having taken part in an assault on a constable, and was killed, according to police, by a ricochet bullet while fleeing from the R.C.M.P. behind his family home at Saint Lambert.⁵⁶ The incident was given extremely wide coverage in

Le Bloc as well as in Le Devoir, particularly when it was suggested that there was evidence to prove that the fatal wound had been inflicted by a direct shot rather than a ricochet. During a radio speech on 22 May, Laurendeau blamed the incident on the Liberal party, which for years had opposed conscription in Quebec:

Cette jeunesse, vous l'avez élevée, politiquement, dans la crainte et dans l'horreur de la conscription ... Vous l'avez nourrie dans la haine de la guerre à l'étranger. Dans ce temps là, vous pensiez aux intérêts canadiens, disiez-vous. A chaque aventure électorale, pour vaincre des adversaires qui avaient du moins sur vous la supériorité de la franchise, vous faisiez revivre le spectre de la conscription de 1917.⁵⁷

Evoking the image of a young farmer dying in the field which he had planted and of his helpless parents whom he had supported, the Bloc Populaire transformed the death of Guénette into the symbol of French Canada betrayed by its leaders:

Ce sang innocent crie plus haut que nos paroles, plus fort que nos écrits, plus vigoureusement que nos protestations, que King, Cardin, et Godbout sont les bourreaux qui ont trompé les pauvres, les faibles, promettant qu'il n'y aurait pas de conscription, sachant d'avance qu'il y en aurait une ... La mort de Georges Guénette n'est pas un fait divers, mais c'est le symbole du mal que les vieux partis ont fait à notre peuple, des souffrances que nous avons endurées, des malheurs qui nous menacent, si nous ne changeons pas de direction.⁵⁸

The tragedy of the event easily aroused public sympathy and indignation, and the "murder" of Georges Guénette figured prominently in the speeches of both leaders and candidates of the Bloc Populaire.

The month of May marked a definite quickening of the campaign of the Bloc Populaire. Meetings multiplied, with sixteen

being held the weekend of the eighth and ninth.⁵⁹ In the May thirteenth edition of Le Devoir the party announced its imminent "invasion" of the province, declaring its intention to hold approximately thirty public meetings every Sunday.⁶⁰ Many of these meetings were held at the level of the local parish and took place following Sunday morning mass. Many of the speakers at these local assemblies were less known Bloc members who later appeared as Bloc candidates in the election.⁶¹ That the activities of the Bloc Populaire had been effective to this point was suggested by the results of a poll conducted by the Canadian Institute of Public Opinion which was released on 20 May. According to their tabulations, the Liberal party was leading the race with 38 percent of the electoral support, the Bloc followed second with 25 percent, while the Union Nationale placed only third with 15 percent. Those voting for one of the other parties and the undecided voters accounted for the remaining 22 percent.⁶²

The May twenty-first public appearance of Henri Bourassa in support of the Bloc Populaire eclipsed all other party activities of the moment. An enthusiastic crowd filled the Palais Montcalm in Quebec City and overflowed to the streets outside to hear Bourassa make his first public address in that city since 1907. André Laurendeau acknowledged the great debt owed to Bourassa by French Canadians and added, "Nous voulons continuer modestement ce que lui a commencé magnifiquement."⁶³ Introduced as "un très grand ami du Bloc Populaire Canadien,"

Bourassa began by denouncing the demoralizing effect of the war, particularly on family life, and designated the Bloc Populaire as the only party offering policies which would guarantee the future of French Canada. He therefore advised his audience to vote for the Bloc Populaire or, in the absence of a Bloc candidate in a particular constituency, to vote for the C.C.F., rather than for a "mouton rouge" or a "mouton bleu."⁶⁴ The declaration of support for the Bloc subsequently received a great deal of publicity from the party, but because of the Bloc's opposition to the C.C.F., the second half of the admonition was virtually ignored.

Bourassa also took the opportunity to explain a rather controversial letter which he had written the previous year advising a friend that, while he should vote for the Bloc Populaire federally, provincially he should support the Union Nationale.⁶⁵ This advice, Bourassa explained, had been prompted by a fear that a fierce attack on the Union Nationale by the Bloc would only strengthen the advantage of the Liberals and weaken any opposition to them. However, since that time he had modified his position because of two main factors. First of all, the Bloc members most strongly opposed to Duplessis had since left the party, preventing an all-out battle between the two parties. Secondly, Raymond had confided the responsibility of the provincial field to André Laurendeau, making it possible for Raymond to concentrate more fully on federal concerns. As a result of these developments, Bourassa was publicly endorsing

the Bloc Populaire both federally and provincially:

A moins d'une autre révolution, je suis prêt à appuyer le mouvement de M. Laurendeau au provincial, comme j'appuierai celui de M. Raymond au fédéral.⁶⁶

Hopefully, this affirmation of support would bring the Bloc valuable votes.

In his speech at the Palais Montcalm, Bourassa had described the departure from the Bloc of Gouin, Hamel, and Chaloult in much the same terms as had Maxime Raymond at the time of the split. The three dissident members "se sont exclus eux-mêmes", Bourassa had stated, and although he regretted that Philippe Hamel had "une idée fixe," the door was always open for reconciliation.⁶⁷ However, it was evident that by this time the opportunities for reconciliation had passed. In fact, Paul Gouin favoured launching a distinct movement which in all probability would oppose the Bloc Populaire.⁶⁸ However, because of lack of money and the hesitation of his associates, Gouin announced on 29 May that the "trio dissident" would not present a slate of candidates in the provincial elections. However, he himself would be a candidate in the constituency of Assomption and he hoped that Hamel and Chaloult would continue the fight as well.⁶⁹

René Chaloult also rejected the possibility of reconciliation with the Bloc at that time. Addressing his electors over the radio, he called for the defeat of the Liberal government since "le gouvernement a surtout péché par omission."⁷⁰ Avoiding the question of his own candidacy, he counseled voters

to vote for the candidate rather than the party. Among the candidates he personally would endorse were Paul Gouin, Antonio Barrette and Paul Beaulieu of the Union Nationale, André Laurendeau and Jean Martineau of the Bloc Populaire, and Louis Even and Ernest Grégoire of the Social Credit party.⁷¹ Referring to Bourassa's declaration of support for the Bloc Populaire, Chaloult remarked that while he respected Bourassa's accomplishments, he did not always follow his advice. Raising the question of whether or not the Bloc Populaire was better than the other parties, Chaloult gave no definite reply. Instead he countered by asking whether any changes had taken place since he had left it:

Par exemple, Edouard Lacroix est-il encore membre du Bloc? Sinon, qui finance actuellement le parti? Quelles garanties nous offre-t-on de combattre les trusts par les moyens les plus énergiques et les plus efficaces?⁷²

While not directly opposing the Bloc Populaire, Chaloult also refused to endorse the party and, when he accepted an invitation from a group of individuals to contest the constituency of Quebec County, his party affiliation was listed as independent.

By June the province was well engrossed in the activities usually preliminary to an election and all that remained was for Adélard Godbout to announce the election date. By this time the pattern of the campaign of the Bloc Populaire had been established for some time and the party continued its barrage of radio speeches and rallies throughout the province. André Laurendeau was particularly busy, but he was supported by an enthusiastic group of activists which included Philippe Girard, Jean Drapeau,

Jacques Sauriol, Marcel Poulin, and many others.⁷³ They continued to vigorously attack both the Liberals and the Union Nationale, "les vieux partis" which brought the country only war and financial disruption. The prospects of the Bloc Populaire increased throughout June, and historian Mason Wade even suggests that, had the election been held in early July, the Bloc Populaire would have had a good chance of defeating the Liberals.⁷⁴ The victory of the C.C.F. in Saskatchewan on the fifteenth of June encouraged the Bloc who optimistically interpreted the victory as an indication that voters were turning to the alternatives offered by the third parties:

Le résultat de l'élection dans la Saskatchewan montre une fois de plus le dégoût du peuple canadien pour les vieux partis et son aspiration vers un ordre nouveau ... Que M. Godbout déclenche les élections. Nous sommes prêts.⁷⁵

However, an incident occurred near the end of June which raised the possibility that Godbout would avoid a summer election. The opponents of the Liberals were conveniently provided with fresh ammunition for an electoral attack by one of the Liberals' own party members, the newly appointed Liberal senator from Quebec, T.D. Bouchard. Bouchard, in his maiden speech in the Senate on 21 June, caused a furor in Quebec when he condemned the way history was taught in his native province, accusing those that taught it of intentionally promoting a distrust of English-speaking Canadians, and declared that this was only one aspect of a broader revolutionary movement.⁷⁶ This movement was led by the extreme nationalists of the secret society, l'Ordre de

Jacques Cartier, whose influence was evident throughout the province and which extended to control of the Bloc Populaire. The aim of this subversive and wide-spread movement was the establishment of an independent French and Catholic state based on the concept of a corporative society.

Bouchard's "revelations" brought conflicting responses from the province. It prompted outraged denials from many French Canadians, both nationalists and non-nationalists, while the English-speaking population seemed ready to accept his assertions.⁷⁷ The Bloc issued a strongly worded reply to Bouchard in which Maxime Raymond accused him of using the protection of the Senate to,

... déverser sa bile anticléricale et antinationale sur les institutions les plus sacrées de sa province ... C'est le geste méprisable de celui qui renie et foule aux pieds tout ce qui a permis à ses compatriotes de survivre et de conserver leur langue et leur foi.⁷⁸

Demands for Bouchard's dismissal from his position as president of the newly created Quebec Hydro rose from several sectors, including the Union Nationale, and, while Godbout acceded to these demands and dismissed Bouchard, the controversy caused by his outspoken criticism of his own province continued. André Laurendeau dismissed the firing of Bouchard as a purely political move and then went on to demonstrate how the Bloc Populaire would benefit from the issue for electoral purposes:

Remarquons tout de suite que cette explosion de haine et de fanatisme dépasse largement le point de vue électoral. Elle laisse entrevoir la vaste conspiration contre la collectivité canadienne-française, entreprise par une large section de personnel libéral, et qui compte des partisans jusqu'au sein du ministère Godbout ... Il est

temps de chasser des postes de commande, ces ennemies de l'intérieur.⁷⁹

The Montreal Star, which had been predicting a provincial election for the last week in July or the first in August, suggested the strong possibility that Godbout would now wait for the fall, choosing the end of September or early October as a more suitable time to face the electorate.⁸⁰ This prediction was proven wrong, however, when Godbout addressed the province by radio on the evening of 28 June and set the election date for 8 August. Reviewing the accomplishments of his government since 1939, Godbout declared his intention of campaigning on provincial issues only and of avoiding any involvement in federal issues over which his government had no control.⁸¹ Demagogues, such as the leader of the opposition and "other politicians of his caliber" had been trying to confuse the issues since 1939:

Ils se sont donc acharnés à mêler les cartes, à confondre les problèmes les plus différents, à identifier les actes du gouvernement fédéral, seul responsable des lois qui engage notre économie et notre capital humain dans la guerre, avec les actes du gouvernement provincial, auquel le pacte fédéral n'a jamais reconnu de compétence en ces matières.⁸²

His government, he had reason to hope, would be judged on its acts alone, and the electorate would not be led astray by the Union Nationale and the Bloc Populaire who "représentent ... la montée redoutable de l'étroitesse d'esprit, de l'opportunisme et du fanatisme dans notre province."⁸³

The Bloc Populaire statement commenting on the announcement of an August election rang with confidence. With the battle cry,

"Nationalistes, en avant!", André Laurendeau predicted that on 8 August the Bloc would begin the institution of a "politique canadienne-française, une politique contre les trusts, une politique intensément familiale."⁸⁴ The Bloc also indicated no intention of altering its campaign to accommodate the Liberals' concept of relevant issues in the election. Jean Drapeau immediately rejected any attempt by Godbout to dissociate himself from Mackenzie King's policies with the assertion that Quebec's Liberal government had been associated "de tout coeur" with the federal government and would now have to accept responsibility for its complicity.⁸⁵

By the first week in July the Liberals and Union Nationale had completed approximately half their nominations. The Bloc Populaire, in spite of its declared intention of running a full slate of ninety-one candidates, had so far only nominated about one-quarter that number. However, since all three parties were already deeply involved in campaigning the announcement merely intensified their activities.

Adélard Godbout, in his speech accompanying his announcement of the election on 28 June, indicated the direction of the Liberal campaign.⁸⁶ Enumerating the Liberal accomplishments since 1939, Godbout emphasized the administrative record of his government. In particular he stressed the reduction in government expenditure, reforms in the areas of agriculture and colonization, and social welfare measures such as the establishment of a Department of Health and Social Welfare and the

extension of allowances for needy mothers. He also pointed to action taken by his government to nationalize Montreal Light, Heat, and Power during the 1944 spring session, describing the measure as only one aspect of an over-all programme of reform sponsored by the Liberals.⁸⁷

However, by the time the first Liberal rally of the official campaign was held at l'Islet on 9 July, Godbout was forced to defend himself on conscription, the issue he hoped to avoid at all costs.⁸⁸ At the l'Islet rally Godbout declared that he had been against conscription in 1939 and still opposed it in 1944. It was only because he had supported the Liberal government at Ottawa in 1940, he told the audience, that there was no conscription in 1944. Godbout was also pushed onto the defensive on the issue of provincial autonomy, the main campaign issue of the Union Nationale.⁸⁹ Godbout protested that he had always resisted excessive demands from Ottawa, but was willing to co-operate with the federal government in the application of the War Measures Act to bring about a quick end to the war.

However, once peace had been won,

J'estime qu'il sera nécessaire, qu'il sera impérieux après la guerre, non seulement d'enlever au gouvernement fédéral les pouvoirs exceptionnels qu'il possède depuis 1939, non seulement de rendre aux provinces les prérogatives que plusieurs d'entre elles ont cédées, mais de refondre le texte et l'esprit de l'Acte de l'Amérique britannique du Nord pour préciser la compétence des gouvernements provinciaux en certaines matières et accroître leurs pouvoirs dans certains autres.⁹⁰

From the emphasis of its campaign it is obvious that the

Liberal party considered Duplessis and his Union Nationale a far more dangerous adversary than the Bloc Populaire. However, the Bloc received its share of attacks, frequently in a scathingly condescending tone, the frequency of which increased as the campaign progressed. According to Godbout, the Bloc was composed of hotheads, inexperienced in public life "qui veulent substituer leurs songes creux à la réalité objective."⁹¹ What the Bloc preached was "académisme politique" and their goals were inaccessible utopias.⁹² At first Godbout usually derided the Bloc for their youth, inexperience and idealism. However, as the campaign intensified, Godbout's attacks on the Bloc became more biting:

Le Bloc Populaire est constitué de fanatiques et de jeunes fanatiques. Vous ne désirez certes pas à la tête de votre province des mécontents, des agents de discorde et un premier ministre comme André Laurendeau, à peine âgé de trente ans --je me trompe, je pense qu'il a trente ans maintenant --qui est bien joli, mais qui n'a jamais serré la main d'un brave habitant. Il aurait fait un excellent enfant de chœur, mais il lui manque tout de même un peu d'expérience pour présider à l'administration de notre province.⁹³

Godbout accused these "jeunes politiciens imberbes" of wanting to isolate Quebec from the rest of Canada, of creating "une réserve de sauvages", and eventually leading Quebec into separation.⁹⁴ He particularly appealed to the youth of Quebec not to be lead astray by the outbursts of the Bloc Populaire:

Si l'on accordait au Bloc, même un peu de sympathie, je craindrais pour l'avenir. Cela pourrait signifier le début de la guerre civile ... La ruine attend ceux qui seront assez fous pour entendre des appels de ceux qui dynamiteraient l'édifice de la Confédération et qui y mettraient le feu.⁹⁵

The increasingly virulent tone of Godbout's comments could have been provoked by the increasingly outspoken campaign conducted by the Bloc Populaire, but it could also have been the result of a growing fear of the threat posed by the Bloc.

The Union Nationale campaigned primarily on the issue of provincial autonomy. Duplessis accused Godbout of severely weakening the authority of the provincial government by ceding essential provincial rights to Ottawa, particularly in the area of taxation. Referring to the 1942 agreement reached between the federal and provincial governments giving the federal government control of corporation and income taxes, Duplessis claimed that "M. Godbout a cédé au fédéral le droit de taxer les riches et il a gardé le droit de taxer les pauvres."⁹⁶ A Union Nationale government, he declared, would not only reclaim control of these areas of taxation, but also abolish the tax most affecting the lower income groups, the provincial sales tax. Duplessis also attacked the administrative record of the Liberal government. He completely rejected the nationalization of Montreal Light, Heat and Power as a bolshevist measure inspired by purely electoral considerations: " ... M. Godbout, après avoir réussi à faire chanter⁹⁷ l'électorat en 1939, s'imaginer pouvoir l'électrocuter en 1944."⁹⁸ Another argument frequently invoked by Duplessis was that the Union Nationale was the only provincial party independent of federal ties. Claiming that it was "l'essence même" of the federative agreement that the provincial parties be completely independent of the

federal parties, he pointed out that the Union Nationale was the only party meeting these requirements.⁹⁹ This claim gave the Union Nationale an argument to use against the Bloc Populaire, which was also strongly autonomist in its policies, but which was active both federally and provincially.

The Union Nationale ignored the issue of the war almost completely and also paid very little attention to the Bloc Populaire until the later stages of the campaign. Then, like the Liberals, the Union Nationale ridiculed the youth and idealism of the Bloc, calling it "l'affaire de vocations tardives, composée de novices, postulants, profès, et patriotes à retardement."¹⁰⁰ However, it also adopted the more ingenious approach of claiming Liberal parenthood for the Bloc. The Bloc had been created by Godbout and the Liberals, postulated Duplessis, because the Liberal leader realized how seriously discredited his party was in Quebec.¹⁰¹ The Bloc's leaders were of Liberal background and would revert to their former colours once the victory had been gained. Duplessis even claimed that an agreement had been reached between Adélard Godbout and Maxime Raymond. Referring to the 1931 investigation of the Beauharnois scandal, Duplessis said that it had been conclusively proven that Senator Donat Raymond, the brother of "pure Maxime", had contributed to the electoral fund of the Liberals. Now, Duplessis claimed, Godbout and Maxime Raymond were involved in "le même jeu, et M. Raymond a eu la promesse d'être récompensé."¹⁰²

There was also considerable resentment among certain

Union Nationale candidates over opposition from the Bloc Populaire in their constituencies. This was particularly true for those of the Union Nationale who had been active in, or sympathetic to, the campaign of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, but who had remained with Duplessis. Antonio Barrette complained that, while he had campaigned for a "NON" decision in the plebiscite, he was now opposed by a Bloc candidate. The same applied to Omer Côté and Laurent Barré in their constituencies, yet the Bloc had not chosen a candidate to oppose the provincial Liberal leader in L'Islet.¹⁰³

The Bloc Populaire continued its campaign in much the same way as it had for the last four months. While various aspects of its platform continued to be mentioned, particularly questions concerned with labour, agriculture, or the family, more and more attention was directed to the issue of the war.¹⁰⁴ At a large and enthusiastic rally in Maxime Raymond's home constituency of Beauharnois, both Bloc leaders concentrated on the provincial Liberals' acceptance of the federal war policies. Raymond declared that, while Godbout in 1944 only wanted to discuss provincial matters, he had won the 1939 election on a federal issue, conscription. Now he must account for the promises which he had made five years ago.¹⁰⁵ Laurendeau echoed the federal leader, declaring:

La grande question, c'est la guerre. Elle pèse lourdement sur notre vie provinciale; la guerre qui a apporté les taxes, la conscription, les restrictions sans nombre, l'ordonnance de délation, la ruine financière de notre pays, la dépense de milliards. La guerre et la conscription qui ont fait élire M. Godbout en 1939, va balayer toute la province.¹⁰⁶

The first aim of the Bloc, he declared, was the defeat of imperialism; the second, the defeat of "la dictature économique." By now these phrases had become a familiar refrain in the speeches of the Bloc Populaire.

The Bloc opened its campaign on July twelfth with a massive rally at the Marché Jean Talon in Montreal. André Laurendeau led a motorcade to the auditorium accompanied by a group of young supporters led by Marc Carrière, brandishing placards inscribed with phrases such as "Brisons les chaînes avec André Laurendeau, soyons maîtres chez nous" and "Le Canada aux Canadiens."¹⁰⁷ At the Marché Jean Talon a crowd estimated by the Gazette at thirty thousand greeted Laurendeau and Maxime Raymond with a standing ovation. The federal leader of the Bloc reviewed the failure of the provincial Liberals to keep their promises of avoiding conscription and then declared that conscription already existed in reality, referring to the posting of Canadian soldiers on Kiska Island in Alaska.¹⁰⁸ Raymond was followed by André Laurendeau, who was greeted with another standing ovation when he announced that he had accepted the invitation of the Laurier constituency to run as their candidate. The crowd then saluted the young leader by singing the traditional, "Il a gagné ses épaulettes." Laurendeau reviewed the war policies of the opposition parties and then turned to the reforms which the Bloc would introduce, emphasizing reforms such as family allowances, slum clearance, and agricultural credit.¹⁰⁹

While the basic arguments used by the Bloc Populaire did not change, the tone of its campaign became increasingly unrestrained. However, the more violent of its declarations did not come from the leaders of the Bloc, but from candidates or supporters of the party. At Saint Eustache on 2 July, Jacques Sauriol defiantly declared, "Nous sommes contre les guerres étrangères, que cela fasse ou non plaisir à la police fédérale,"¹¹⁰ and he is also attributed with the statement that the Bloc Populaire would stop "le drainage de notre jeunesse vers les charniers d'Europe."¹¹¹ Roger Vézina, writing in Le Bloc, declared support for a republican Canada:

Nous aspirons au jour où le Canada, troisième puissance économique de l'Amérique, sera devenu un pays libre, affranchi de tout lien impérial et se rangera parmi les autres nations libres avec le titre de 22^e république d'Amérique -- la République du Canada.¹¹²

The Bloc was also accused of anti-semitism, of which several examples can be found in Le Bloc.¹¹³ However, André Laurendeau asserted several times that the Bloc was not anti-semitic, and maintained that it would reject any policies discriminating against a particular national or racial group.¹¹⁴ To an accusation by the Montreal Star that the members of the Bloc were "des Hitlériens de la pire espèce," Laurendeau replied:

Un journal qui se prétend sérieux devrait réfléchir avant de lancer de pareilles injures à la face des citoyens loyaux et aussi canadiens que n'importe au Canada.¹¹⁵

He also denied that the Bloc was only a party of young and inexperienced people, mentioning older members such as Maxime Raymond and Jean Martineau, or that it had any desire to lead

Quebec into separation. The Bloc envisaged economic restoration, not revolution, and its economic reforms would benefit the whole province.¹¹⁶

The Bloc also made several attempts to explain its policies to the English-speaking voters. André Laurendeau made a particular appeal to them on 14 July during a radio broadcast in English.¹¹⁷ While Laurendeau's tone when addressing the English-speaking electorate was more measured, the content of the Bloc platform was in no way altered. The main aim of the Bloc seems to have been to convince the English-speaking voter that the Bloc was not composed of fanatics as represented by the English-language press, and that the English-speaking population had nothing to fear from a Bloc victory. Laurendeau explained that the aim of the Bloc was "to preserve in the province of Quebec the French culture, alongside that of the English-speaking Canadians."¹¹⁸ Rather than separate Quebec from the rest of Canada, the Bloc Populaire wanted to increase understanding between the two national groups, but,

... the Bloc Populaire Canadien wants the Confederation pact to be kept by all parties so as to prevent any separation of any of its provinces. We believe that there can be unity in Canada only if the Confederation pact of 1867 is obeyed in spirit as well as in fact.¹¹⁹

The Bloc, he assured them, was "neither anti-British, anti-Irish, anti-Jewish, or anti any other ethnical group," and if elected, would not permit any discriminatory policies against any ethnic group.¹²⁰ While the Bloc did not campaign extensively among the English-speaking population, it did attempt to communicate to it. This campaigning was limited largely to radio broadcasts,

as the Bloc did not advertize in the English language press.¹²¹ Gordon Rothney, the Bloc's English-speaking candidate in Brome,¹²² campaigned with André Laurendeau in the Eastern Townships, calling for a new understanding between French and English Canadians. He also spoke for the Bloc over the radio, supporting the party in its call for complete Canadian independence¹²³ and in its opposition to conscription. Rothney pointed out what he considered to be the three basic principles of the Bloc Populaire: complete cultural freedom, or the right of any Canadian to have any language or religion he wanted; a Canadian outlook in world politics; and economic freedom so that individual initiative would no longer be at the mercy of the monopolies.¹²⁴

However, the efforts of the Bloc in this area did not meet with much success. Although the Bloc's radio broadcasts in English were an attempt to dispel any image of fanaticism, the party did not appear moderate to the English-speaking audience. André Laurendeau had barely finished his first broadcast when the radio station began receiving protests over it.¹²⁵ The poor showing of the Bloc Populaire in the constituencies dominated by English-speaking voters demonstrates quite effectively the failure of the party to win any acceptance among the English-speaking population of Quebec.

In addition to the three major parties, the C.C.F., the Social Credit (or Union des Electeurs), and the Labour Progressive parties also presented candidates. Of these, only the first two nominated a significant number. The C.C.F. presented twenty-four

candidates, primarily in urban centers, and the Social Credit party contested ten seats, most of them in the area of Quebec City. While the Union Nationale and Liberals each presented a full slate of candidates, the Bloc nominated only eighty, and several of these were chosen during the final two weeks of campaigning. No Bloc candidates opposed Paul Gouin in l'Assomption, nor René Chaloult in Quebec County, and the Bloc did not nominate a candidate in the predominantly English and upper class district of Outremont in Montreal. Many names familiar in Bloc activities appeared on the list of Bloc candidates. The outspoken Jacques Sauriol ran in Hochelaga-Maisonneuve and Jean Drapeau tried his luck, provincially this time, in the constituency of Jeanne-Mance. André Laurendeau, of course, had accepted the nomination in Montreal-Laurier, and Bloc activists such as Fernand Chaussé, Jean Mercier, and André Vigeant were also candidates. In Montreal-Sainte-Marie, the former constituency of the interned Camilien Houde, the Bloc nominated Raphael Beaudette, who immediately issued a statement to deny any accusations that he was attempting to usurp the position of the absent Camilien.¹²⁶ In the Quebec district Pierre Gauthier abandoned the federal field to contest the provincial seat of Portneuf, and Edouard Lacroix also ran as a provincial candidate. As a result of his earlier misunderstandings with Raymond, he participated very little in the general campaign and conducted his own campaign independently from the rest of the party.

Of the "dissident trio", only Paul Gouin and René Chaloult ran as candidates, both as independents. As mentioned above,

neither was opposed by the Bloc, although the party had been fairly active in l'Assomption where Gouin ran. Philippe Hamel announced on 19 July that he definitely would not be a candidate in the August eighth election, but would campaign in support of both Gouin and Chaloult.

The Bloc Populaire rally at the Marché Jean Talon was an auspicious beginning for its official campaign and the Bloc maintained an impressive pace with rallies and speeches. André Laurendeau was a particularly tireless worker, addressing sometimes two or three rallies a day, often travelling from town to town to do so. Much of his time was spent away from his own constituency, providing support for various candidates, and he visited a considerable number of constituencies from the Lac Saint-Jean and Saguenay district, down into the Eastern Townships. Maxime Raymond also participated in the campaigning, although to a lesser degree, confining his appearance to the major rallies and a few meetings in support of individual candidates.

Duplessis and the Union Nationale concentrated most of its attention on the rural areas, which not only were most receptive to the Union Nationale, but also provided a greater number of seats. Duplessis' emphasis on provincial autonomy changed very little throughout, and the same themes and phrases recur in his speeches.

The attacks of the Union Nationale and the Bloc Populaire on the Liberals had placed the government party on the defensive, both on the issue of provincial autonomy and participation in the

war. However, Godbout used the progress of the war to his advantage, declaring that the war had been won, and that it was almost over. Because of that,

Il ne peut y avoir de conscription. Nos adversaires se servent de cet épouvantail pour animer les esprits faibles.

... Je l'ai dit depuis cinq ans et je ne me lasserai pas de le répéter: pas un seul cultivateur ne fera du service militaire. C'est à la ferme que vous deviez faire votre effort de guerre.¹²⁷

However, in certain areas the response to the Liberal campaign was not encouraging. At the opening rally at the Marché Saint-Jacques in Montreal, at which attendance was possible only through the presentation of a pass, Le Devoir reported a "maigre" attendance.¹²⁸ At several meetings outside Montreal, Godbout and the Liberal speakers were interrupted and heckled by the audience. At Chicoutimi, Godbout left the stage without delivering his speech.¹²⁹

The greatest advantage of the Liberals was their ample financing and experienced organization, areas in which the Union Nationale was also adequately provided. These were precisely the areas of weakness of the Bloc Populaire, although in Montreal it could rely on a considerable number of workers from constituency organizations. Another advantage of the Liberal party was its newspaper support. The three major English language dailies were favorable to the Liberal party and the Herald and the Star openly supported it.¹³⁰ In the French language press it had, of course, the support of Le Canada, which it controlled, and of La Presse. La Presse also gave good coverage to the Union

Nationale and the Bloc Populaire, but the only newspaper really sympathetic to both was Le Devoir.¹³¹

Le Devoir had championed the Bloc Populaire since its inception and it continued to defend it during the campaign. To Godbout's claim that a Bloc government would result in civil war, Omer Héroux replied that the Bloc Populaire proposed to,

... faire triompher un esprit nouveau, mais ils ne prêchent point la révolution ... Il est absurde de prétendre qu'il songe à la guerre civile.¹³²

Le Devoir also rejected charges by the Winnipeg Free Press that the Bloc was separatist and frequently offered rebuttal to the Montreal Star in its attacks against the nationalists. It offered unqualified support of the Bloc, explaining to its readers why they should reject the policies of the "vieux partis" of the Liberals and Union Nationale. Georges Pelletier recommended the Bloc Populaire as " ... un groupe d'hommes auxquels le principal reproche que l'on fait, c'est d'être jeunes. Pourtant, ils ont du talent, une doctrine, un programme, des principes, un courage qui imposent le Bloc Populaire à l'opinion publique."¹³³ For these reasons, Pelletier urged the Devoir readers to support the Bloc:

Et le 8 août prochain, le Québec devra voter en masse pour le mouvement qui l'affranchira et commencer par élire des candidats du Bloc Populaire provincial, dont M. Maxime Raymond a eu la juste idée, et qui dirige si vaillamment M. André Laurendeau, jeune homme de grand talent, dont l'idéal et les principes sont autrement fiables que ceux de tant de politiciens, bleus, rouges ou simplement opportunistes.¹³⁴

The encouragement of Le Devoir was matched by equally

vituperative denunciations from the Montreal Star. While the Star paid very little attention to the activities of the Bloc, the party frequently found itself the object of biting attacks on the editorial page. The Star found nothing constructive in the platform of the Bloc Populaire:

Its policy is one of isolation for Quebec, and although its leaders try to persuade the public that it has a national policy, it has, in fact, a policy that can find support only in the most bigoted circles. It is, of course, anti-war. It is not pacifist, mark you, because it encourages violence, as a reading of its publications will show; it is opposed only to Canadian participation in this war, and this opposition induces an unchristian hatred comparable only to the Nazis at their worst.¹³⁵

It was statements of this kind which created in the minds of the English-speaking population of the province the idea that the Bloc Populaire was a fanatical and fascist movement.

A new element in the 1944 election was the feminine vote and all parties made some appeal to the female section of the electorate. Even Maurice Duplessis, who had opposed extending the suffrage to women, paid tribute to their good judgment. Both the Union Nationale and the Bloc Populaire used women in their campaigning, although they did not support women adopting politics as a career.¹³⁶ Mme Eva Doyle, one of the women who appeared at a Bloc Populaire meeting, counseled her feminine listeners:

Il ne s'agit donc pas pour vous, mesdames, de faire de la politique une carrière et d'usurper à votre famille la meilleure part de votre vie. La femme au foyer restera toujours l'idéal dans le programme du Bloc Populaire Canadien et les principes de la vie de famille ne doivent pas être atteints par aucune considération d'ordre politique.¹³⁷

However, she did make some concessions to feminist ideals:

... il est temps de cesser de considérer la femme comme une enfant et comme un être faible et dépendant, quand, depuis des années déjà, elle se révèle tout autrement.¹³⁸

The Bloc even held a "ralliement féminin" just a week prior to the election, when André Laurendeau was joined on the speakers' platform by Mme Michel Chartrand, Mme Hélène Boucher-Rivest, and Mme Paul Massé.¹³⁹ The parties, in their appeals to the feminine vote, emphasized social rather than political issues, and all three major parties included in their platform the idea of a "politique familiale."

The campaign closed in the midst of a 'strike of public transport workers. In spite of the handicap of the lack of public transportation, an estimated eighteen thousand packed the Montreal stadium 3 August for the closing rally of the Bloc Populaire which featured, for the second time that year, Henri Bourassa speaking in support of the Bloc.¹⁴⁰ Many gathered outside to listen to the addresses by means of loudspeakers. Almost all of the Montreal candidates were present on the platform and Maxime Raymond, on seeing the crowd, declared he was sure that the Bloc Populaire would sweep the province. He reminded the audience that the vote of August eighth would be interpreted as a vote for or against conscription: a vote for Godbout would be a vote of approval of the policies of Mackenzie King; a vote for Duplessis would be a vote for Bracken, his ally.¹⁴¹

Wave after wave of applause greeted André Laurendeau when he rose to speak. Commenting on the Bloc's desire to see an

independent foreign policy for Canada he stipulated:

Ce n'est pas être un fils déloyal que de faire en sorte d'être un vrai Canadien, et que notre attachement le plus intime et le plus intense aille vers la province de Québec qui nous a donné notre culture.¹⁴²

The highlight of the evening of course was the speech of Henri Bourassa and the aging nationalist rapidly warmed to his topic. Pointing out that he was speaking only as a private citizen and not as a member of the Bloc Populaire, Bourassa asked his audience to vote for the Bloc. He admitted that he had first wanted the Bloc to limit itself to activity in the federal field in order to oppose "le mouvement de suicide national où nous conduit un parti qui fut libéral un jour, mais qui a perdu aujourd'hui le droit à ce titre ...," but Maxime Raymond, for whom Bourassa expressed the most profound respect, convinced him that the Bloc must also enter the fight provincially.¹⁴³ Bourassa also praised André Laurendeau, commenting "il a en lui l'étoffe d'un homme d'Etat et d'un dirigeant"¹⁴⁴ and went on to declare his intention of voting for the Bloc Populaire:

Mardi prochain je voterai en faveur du Bloc Populaire dans ma circonscription et je vous demande d'en faire autant dans vos comtés respectifs.¹⁴⁵

Don't wait for men with miracles, he advised, but support those men with courage and devotion. Under those circumstances, it was "un devoir moral" to vote for the Bloc Populaire.

Bourassa also demonstrated that evening that he had lost none of his ability to arouse controversy. He regretted, he concluded, that in a Christian country, the principles of Christianity were not respected and that politicians were

willing to use the Church and those connected with it for their own purposes. However, he warned,

Le jour n'est pas loin, malheureusement, où l'on se moquera de ses évêques qui ont fait de la politique, et ces hommes qui se servent d'eux aujourd'hui leur tourneront le dos en disant qu'ils ont fait leur temps.¹⁴⁶

However, Quebec still had need of her spiritual leaders, so he requested, in order that they retain the respect of the people, "ne vous faites pas les instruments de politiciens sans conscience qui vous exploitent."¹⁴⁷ The reference was obviously to the unofficial support of the Catholic hierarchy in Quebec for the Union Nationale party, and the scolding by Bourassa in public did not endear Bourassa any more to the bishops or lower clerical circles, and may even have alienated certain clerical support for the Bloc Populaire.

During the closing rally in his constituency of Laurier André Laurendeau confidently predicted that on election day he would again address his constituents as a member of the legislature and as premier of the province. On the evening of August eighth Laurendeau was indeed a legislative member, but the Bloc had been far from winning the support necessary to make Laurendeau premier of the province. The Union Nationale returned to power with forty-five seats, even though they had captured only thirty-six percent of the popular vote.¹⁴⁸ The Liberals, with thirty-seven percent of the popular vote had won only thirty-seven seats. The Bloc Populaire vote was much below expectations. The new party had polled fifteen percent

of the popular vote, but had taken only four seats. André Laurendeau had won in Laurier and Edouard Lacroix squeezed through in La Beauce, although by a much smaller margin than usual. The other two Bloc victories were in areas where the party already had had some strength: Albert Lemieux had taken the provincial seat in Maxime Raymond's territory of Beauharnois; and Ovila Bergeron had won the provincial seat of Stanstead. In only four instances did the Bloc candidate place second, and in only one case was the vote significantly close. That was in Jeanne-Mance, where a thousand votes separated Jean Drapeau and the Liberal winner.¹⁴⁹ Dr. Pierre Gauthier had been defeated in Portneuf, as had Fernand Chaussé in Laval. In many areas, such as the Gaspé region, the Bloc failed to record a significant vote at all.

While André Laurendeau and Maxime Raymond both greeted the election results optimistically and predicted that their wins marked only the beginning of the Bloc's rise to power,¹⁵⁰ the results were disappointing. Even the Montreal Star commented somewhat smugly that the Bloc vote had been considerably lower than what had been anticipated.¹⁵¹

A regional study of provincial elections in Quebec shows that the Bloc enjoyed the greatest degree of success in urban areas.¹⁵² According to this study the Bloc polled 16.7% of the metropolitan vote. The next highest percentage came from the Abitibi-Temiscamingue area, where the Bloc polled 16.4% of the popular vote. While the author of the study does not classify this as an urban area, he does classify

as urban the region of Lac St-Jean and Saguenay, where the Bloc attained its third largest percentage. Therefore, he concludes, "l'appui des urbains au Bloc Populaire se serait manifesté de façon assez concrète quand même."¹⁵³ Through a similar classification of these regions according as to whether predominantly of superior or inferior occupations, he also concludes that the Bloc received greater support from those regions marked by a predominance of superior occupations.¹⁵⁴ According to this same study, the Liberal party also received its greatest support from urban areas, particularly Montreal, while the Union Nationale polled a higher vote in rural areas.¹⁵⁵

In the Montreal area the Bloc recorded the greatest proportion of its vote in French-speaking districts. A study of the Montreal constituencies alone shows that the Bloc registered 25.2% of the vote in the constituencies where the French language predominated, but only 7.6% in those ridings where English was the most common language.¹⁵⁶ Further, Bloc votes in English-speaking constituencies came from those which contained a considerable proportion of French-speaking voters.

Considering the emphasis placed by the Bloc on the issue of the war, it is not surprising that the majority of its strength should come from the French-speaking electorate. The concept of a "politique pro-Canadienne française" in Quebec on which the party based its political platform had little attraction for the English-speaking voter. Any doubt remaining in the minds of an English voter would have been dispelled by

newspaper coverage on the Bloc, such as that presented by the Montreal Star.

However, these findings show that the emphasis in the Bloc platform on agricultural reform was not great enough to attract a significant rural vote, or that the attraction offered by the reforms proposed by the Bloc was counter-acted by some other factors. Most probably, the rather vehement declarations of the more outspoken Bloc members created too much distrust and suspicion among the rural population, who turned to the Union Nationale instead. The social policies of the Union Nationale were also more conservative, and therefore more easily accepted by the basically conservative rural population of Quebec.

While the Bloc had also made a strong appeal to the working elements of the electorate, its labour programme had not been radical enough to compete with those of the C.C.F. and Labour-Progressives in densely working class districts. Within the French-speaking electorate, the Bloc was supported primarily by the educated classes, that "elite" of French Canadian society which has traditionally promoted nationalist protest.

More practical reasons for the poor showing of the Bloc Populaire should also be considered. The lack of funds is most frequently mentioned, both by observers and by Bloc members. However, Marie-Louis Beaulieu of Quebec City, in analyzing the reasons for the Bloc's defeat, also places a great deal of the blame on poor organization.¹⁵⁷ Without spending any more money, Beaulieu wrote Raymond, the Bloc could have created a much more effective organization. What had been lacking had been strong

local organizations, the "cadres" on which the other parties relied. Instead of concentrating on building solid local strength, Beaulieu observed, the Bloc organizers had placed too much emphasis on large public rallies:

Ce qu'il fallait, ce n'était pas une tournée en étoile filante de huit ou dix assemblées dans une semaine, en se garrochant d'une place à l'autre, mais une assemblée suivie de quelques jours de travail d'organisation, puis d'une autre assemblée suivie d'un travail semblable.¹⁵⁸

Beaulieu was particularly critical of the organization in the district of Quebec City, laying most of the blame on Pierre Gauthier. While Beaulieu and Gauthier had not been on the best of terms, other letters in the same vein give some support to Beaulieu's complaints.¹⁵⁹

The internal problems of the Bloc also weakened the support of the party. Paul Gouin, Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult had a great many supporters in Quebec, and many of these abandoned the Bloc at the same time as did the trio. In addition, their attacks on the Bloc created certain doubts as to the reliability of the new party, both from the point of view of leadership and commitment.

However, one of the most serious problems which the party failed to overcome was, according to Beaulieu, its inability to win the confidence of the people.¹⁶⁰ In his opinion, many voters had considered the Bloc, and then turned to the Union Nationale. Simply denouncing military imperialism and the economic dictatorship had not been enough to win the electorate. Besides, Beaulieu added, "le peuple ne fait pas de

distinctions subtiles. Il n'a pas vu beaucoup de différence entre Duplessis et nous."¹⁶¹ In the future, the party should place more emphasis on the party's platform, particularly on economic reform: "La guerre ne nous a pas servis tant que cela ... L'effet du plebiscite est fini; il n'était pas loin de l'être lors de la dernière élection."¹⁶²

The campaign of the Bloc Populaire for the 1944 provincial election had begun early in the year, long before any announcement of the election. The two main issues on which the Bloc campaigned, opposition to military imperialism and defeat of the trusts in Quebec, were defined in early spring, and they continued to dominate the party's campaign until 8 August. In fact, no really new issues were introduced by the Bloc after the announcement of the election date. Of secondary interest were the reforms which the Bloc would institute if elected, particularly in the area of social legislation. From the platform, the Bloc concentrated on issues of importance to the family, workers, and farmers. Emotionally charged issues, such as the murder of Georges Guénette, also played a key role in the campaign of the Bloc.

The Bloc Populaire failed to win as considerable a vote as had been expected of it. A number of reasons can be cited for this: lack of adequate financing, limited time and poor organization, its internal disagreements, and distrust of the party as being too radical. The party was considerably disheartened by the defeat, and faced a new series of problems

of an organizational and financial nature. The Bloc would have to overcome these problems if it was going to prove wrong those who now predicted the speedy demise of the party.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER V

¹Le Devoir, February 1, 1944, p. 3.

²I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglio: Correspondance, Maxime Raymond to J. Poulin, February 28, 1944.

³Lacroix's position is fully outlined in a letter from J. Poulin to Maxime Raymond dated February 14, 1944. I.H., ibid., Imbroglio: Correspondance, J. Poulin to Maxime Raymond, February 14, 1944.

⁴The issue was not settled at this time. Lacroix repeated his request in May. I.H., ibid., Correspondance: Imbroglio, Edouard Lacroix to Maxime Raymond.

⁵André Laurendeau remained editor of Le Bloc for the publication of only two issues. He was replaced by Victor Trépanier at the beginning of March. Le Devoir, March 2, 1944, p. 2.

⁶Although the figure seems high, Roger Vezina claimed that by April Le Bloc had attained a circulation of 18,000. Le Devoir, April 4, 1944, p. 6.

⁷The only unfavourable comment on the Bloc Populaire detected in the columns of Le Devoir referred to the song written for the party by the young French Canadian composer, André Mathieu. After the song had been introduced at the Bloc Populaire convention, Le Devoir inquired, "André Mathieu, a-t-il perdu tout son talent pour avoir écrit le chant du Bloc? ... A réflexion, on s'avisera probablement chez notre confrère que le procédé manque un peu de chic." Le Devoir, February 8, 1944, p. 1.

⁸I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, M.-L. Beaulieu to Maxime Raymond, August 22, 1944.

⁹Ibid.

¹⁰PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol 81, "Compte-rendu de l'Assemblée pour l'organisation d'un comité du Bloc Populaire dans la ville de Trois-Rivières, le 6 mars, 1944. Delphis Lachance, Girard Lauerdierer, Paul Larivière."

¹¹Le Devoir, February 21, 1944, p. 3.

¹²Le Bloc, April 22, 1944, p. 8. The Bloc Populaire in the federal constituency of Sainte-Marie-La Flèche had also chosen its candidate by this time -- Me René Hamel of Shawinigan.

¹³Le Devoir, July 31, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁴Le Devoir, July 4, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁵Le Devoir, July 5, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁶Le Devoir, July 8, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁷I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, BEAULIEU, M.-L. Beaulieu to Maxime Raymond, September 14, 1943.

¹⁸Le Devoir, April 28, 1944, p. 10.

¹⁹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Correspondance: Imbroglia, Edouard Lacroix to Maxime Raymond, May 6, 1944.

²⁰These rumours were publicly referred to by Pierre Gauthier during his speech at the Bourassa rally in Quebec City on May 21, 1944. According to Le Devoir, Gauthier remarked, "On a prétendu que M. Lacroix s'est retiré du Bloc. M. Lacroix n'a pas l'habitude de faire faire ses commissions; il est capable de dire lui-même ce qu'il a envie de dire." Le Devoir, May 22, 1944, p. 10.

²¹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Adhésions - Re: Election Prov., Maxime Raymond to W. Desrosiers, October 17, 1944.

²²After the election, Raymond received several disgruntled requests for money which candidates claimed had been promised to them to cover election expenses. Raymond refused to cover any such expenses on the grounds that, if any assurances of financial help had been given, they had not been authorized.

²³Le Devoir, February 14, 1944, p. 6.

²⁴Ibid.

²⁵Ibid.

²⁶Le Devoir, March 6, 1944, p. 7.

²⁷Ibid.

²⁸Le Devoir, February 28, 1944, p. 2.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Le Devoir, March 20, 1944, p. 2.

³²Le Devoir, March 13, 1944, p. 2.

³³Le Devoir, March 20, 1944, p. 7.

³⁴Le Devoir, March 13, 1944, p. 6.

³⁵Ibid. Laurendeau provided the following statistics in support of his argument. Between 1900 and 1935, he claimed, of the 2400 most important companies in Canada, only 381 or 16% preserved their independence. Of these 381, only 127 exercised no control over any other companies, while the other 254 controlled in some way the other 2019 dependent companies. These 254, Laurendeau continued, were largely interdependent through sharing common directors. In the case of Quebec, he cited 8455 factories in 1938. Eight percent of these factories, or 717, accounted for 81% of production, represented 86% of the capital invested, and employed 71% of the province's workers. These 717 factories, he asserted, had, for the most part, come under the control of the fifty or so financiers which controlled the country's economy.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Ibid.

³⁸Le Devoir, March 27, 1944, p. 7.

³⁹Ibid.

⁴⁰Ibid.

⁴¹Ibid.

⁴²Le Devoir, April 3, 1944, p. 3.

⁴³Le Devoir, March 28, 1944, p. 3.

⁴⁴Le Devoir, April 24, 1944, p. 2.

⁴⁵Ibid.

⁴⁶Ibid. According to Laurendeau, Duplessis declared at Trois-Rivières that he was opposed to the war, then six days later at Sherbrooke he asserted that he supported participation in the war.

⁴⁷Ibid.

⁴⁸Ibid.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Le Devoir, March 25, 1944, p. 1, 3. The whole development of the issue is reviewed in this article.

⁵¹Ibid.

⁵²Le Devoir, March 29, 1944, p. 10.

⁵³Le Devoir, April 3, 1944, p. 10.

⁵⁴Le Bloc, April 29, 1944, p. 1.

⁵⁵This phrase formed the headlines of the 29 April issue of Le Bloc. Le Bloc, April 29, 1944, p. 1.

⁵⁶Le Devoir, May 8, 1944, p. 2.

⁵⁷Le Devoir, May 23, 1944, p. 9. See also, Le Bloc, May 27, 1944, p. 2.

⁵⁸Le Devoir, June 12, 1944, p. 7.

⁵⁹Le Devoir, May 10, 1944, p. 2.

⁶⁰Le Devoir, May 13, 1944, p. 2.

⁶¹Among the participants in the early activities of the Bloc Populaire who later became candidates were: Horace Roy in Kamouraska; Raphaël Beaudette in Montreal-Sainte-Marie; Louis-Philippe Hurtubise in Montréal-Verdun; J.-N. Désy in Montreal-Laurier.

⁶²Montreal Star, May 20, 1944, p. 11.

⁶³Le Devoir, May 22, 1944, p. 6.

⁶⁴Ibid. However, M.J. Coldwell replied that he could not return the favour and recommend that voters should vote for the Bloc Populaire in the absence of a C.C.F. candidate: "The C.C.F., of course, has consistently condemned both the narrow nationalism and the anti-war attitude of the Bloc Populaire." Montreal Star, May 23, 1944, p. 7.

⁶⁵The letter referred to was written by Bourassa to Albert Perron, October 21, 1943. See above, p. 127.

⁶⁶Le Devoir, May 22, 1944, p. 6.

⁶⁷Le Devoir, May 22, 1944, p. 6.

⁶⁸Evidence in a series of letters exchanged between Paul Gouin and his secretary, Gaston Dufresne, suggests that Gouin strongly supported the idea of another distinct movement. In a letter of April 20, 1944, Dufresne referred to Gouin's desire to form an independent movement and remarked that, as far as Gouin was concerned, "s'il n'existe pas déjà, c'est que les principaux intéressés ne peuvent s'entendre sur des questions de régie interne." PAC, Paul Gouin Papers, Vol. 80, G. Dufresne to Paul Gouin, April 20, 1944. It would seem, however, that Hamel and Chaloult did not share Gouin's enthusiasm for the idea of another party. Referring to a caucus of their supporters at Trois-Rivières, Gouin wrote to Horace Philippon: "Nous étions quatorze. Ce fut une jolie cacophonie. Le trio est en train de devenir un duo ou un tandem! Ce qui veut dire en d'autres termes, que je suis en train de devenir moi-même un "Lone Wolf!" PAC, ibid., Vol. 81, Paul Gouin to Horace Philippon, April 27, 1944. However, he wrote Philippe Hamel on 5 May, "Les malencontreuses divergences d'opinions survenues dernièrement, n'ont en aucune façon diminué l'admiration et l'amitié que je vous porte ... " PAC, ibid., Vol 80, Paul Gouin to Philippe Hamel, May 5, 1944.

⁶⁹Le Devoir, May 29, 1944, p. 2.

⁷⁰Le Devoir, June 3, 1944, p. 10.

⁷¹Ibid.

⁷²Ibid.

⁷³The June tenth edition of Le Bloc published an extensive list of those who had recently spoken for the party, and among the names is Pierre Elliot Trudeau. Le Bloc, June 10, 1944, p. 8.

⁷⁴Wade, op. cit., p. 1011.

⁷⁵Le Devoir, June 16, 1944, p. 3. A statement issued by André Laurendeau.

⁷⁶Le Devoir, June 22, 1944. A good summary of Bouchard's speech can be found in Wade, op. cit., pp. 996-1001.

⁷⁷Wade, op. cit., p. 1008.

⁷⁸Le Devoir, June 26, 1944, p. 2.

⁷⁹Le Devoir, June 27, 1944, p. 3.

⁸⁰Montreal Star, June 23, 1944, p. 1.

⁸¹Le Devoir, June 29, 1944, p. 7.

⁸²Ibid.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Le Devoir, June 29, 1944, p. 3.

⁸⁵Le Devoir, June 30, 1944, p. 3.

⁸⁶Le Devoir, June 29, 1944, p. 7.

⁸⁷Ibid.

⁸⁸Le Devoir, July 10, 1944, p. 7.

⁸⁹Le Devoir, July 11, 1944, p. 2.

⁹⁰Ibid.

⁹¹Le Devoir, June 29, 1944, p. 7.

⁹²Le Devoir, July 11, 1944, p. 2.

⁹³Le Devoir, July 25, 1944, p. 10.

⁹⁴Le Devoir, July 26, 1944, p. 2.

⁹⁵Le Devoir, July 29, 1944, p. 3.

⁹⁶Le Devoir, June 10, 1944, p. 7.

⁹⁷Faire chanter - this is a reference to the political blackmail which Duplessis claimed that Godbout, with the help of the Federal Liberals, used to win the 1939 election.

⁹⁸Ibid.

⁹⁹Ibid.

¹⁰⁰Le Devoir, July 21, 1944, p. 10. A speech by Anatole Carignan at St. Laurent, Quebec.

¹⁰¹Le Devoir, August 4, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁰²Ibid.

¹⁰³Le Devoir, August 2, 1944, p. 2.

¹⁰⁴In a radio speech on 11 July, Laurendeau reviewed many of the arguments already developed by the Bloc. Both the Liberals and Conservatives were accused of having betrayed Quebec, the Conservatives in 1917 and the Liberals since 1939. Duplessis was denounced for his acceptance of the trusts, once in power,

and his failure to aggressively oppose conscription. Then Laurendeau outlined the areas of reform on which the Bloc would concentrate: family allowances, higher and more equitable wages, public works for the post war period, rural electrification, and increased agricultural aid. Le Devoir, July 12, 1944, p. 8.

¹⁰⁵Le Devoir, July 10, 1944, p. 1.

¹⁰⁶Ibid.

¹⁰⁷Le Devoir, July 13, 1944, p. 2, 6.

¹⁰⁸Ibid.

¹⁰⁹Ibid.

¹¹⁰Le Devoir, July 3, 1944, p. 3.

¹¹¹Rumilly, op. cit., XLI, 113.

¹¹²Le Bloc, June 10, 1944, p. 8.

¹¹³An example is provided in Le Bloc, April 22, 1944, p. 8, which describes a group of young Jewish men arriving in Montreal: "Entre nous, pendant que les Canayens se font trouver la peau sur les champs de bataille de l'Europe, les Youpins, eux, plus pratiques, s'en viennent par centaines faire de bedides affaires au Canada ... "

¹¹⁴Le Devoir, July 15, 1944, p. 1.

¹¹⁵Le Devoir, July 13, 1944, p. 2.

¹¹⁶Le Devoir, July 26, 1944, p. 2.

¹¹⁷Le Devoir, July 15, 1944, p. 1.

¹¹⁸Ibid.

¹¹⁹Ibid.

¹²⁰Ibid.

¹²¹Herbert F. Quinn, "The Quebec Provincial Election of 1944: An Analysis of the Role of the Election in the Democratic Process" (unpublished M.A. thesis, University of McGill, 1946), p. 44.

¹²²The Bloc Populaire also had another English-speaking candidate, T.J. Keane, who was the candidate in Montreal-Sainte-Anne.

¹²³Rothney supported his statement with the assertion, "A country as old as Canada looks ridiculous going around in the colonial clothing of our national childhood." Le Devoir, July 29, 1944, p. 7.

¹²⁴Ibid.

¹²⁵Le Devoir, July 18, 1944, p. 1.

¹²⁶Le Devoir, July 7, 1944, p. 3.

¹²⁷Le Devoir, July 25, 1944, p. 10.

¹²⁸Le Devoir, July 12, 1944, p. 10.

¹²⁹Le Devoir, July 22, 1944, p. 3.

¹³⁰Quinn, op. cit., p. 60.

¹³¹Ibid.

¹³²Le Devoir, July 31, 1944, p. 1.

¹³³Le Devoir, July 22, 1944, p. 1.

¹³⁴Ibid.

¹³⁵Montreal Star, July 5, 1944, p. 10.

¹³⁶One of the women appearing for the Union Nationale was Mme Joseph Bilodeau. Le Devoir, June 7, 1944, p. 2.

¹³⁷Le Devoir, June 7, 1944, p. 2.

¹³⁸Ibid.

¹³⁹Le Devoir, July 28, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁴⁰Le Devoir, August 4, 1944, p. 2.

¹⁴¹Ibid.

¹⁴²Ibid.

¹⁴³Ibid.

¹⁴⁴Ibid.

¹⁴⁵Ibid.

¹⁴⁶Ibid.

¹⁴⁷Ibid.

¹⁴⁸Wade, op. cit., p. 1016.

¹⁴⁹Canadian Parliamentary Guide, 1946, p. 638.

¹⁵⁰Le Devoir, August 9, 1944, p. 3. A statement by André Laurendeau. Le Devoir, August 10, 1944, p. 3. A statement by Maxime Raymond.

¹⁵¹Montreal Star, August 9, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁵²Jean-Louis Desrochers, "Analyse par Régions des Elections de 1935 à 1962" (unpublished thesis, Maitrise en Sciences Sociales, Université de Laval, 1965), p. 57.

¹⁵³Ibid., p. 57.

¹⁵⁴Ibid., p. 58.

¹⁵⁵Ibid., p. 45.

¹⁵⁶Quinn, op. cit., p. 31.

¹⁵⁷I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, M.-L. Beaulieu to Maxime Raymond, August 22, 1944.

¹⁵⁸Ibid.

¹⁵⁹See also letter from Wilfrid Desrosiers to Maxime Raymond, August 10, 1944. I.H., ibid., Adhesions - Re: Elections prov., Wilfrid Desrosiers to Maxime Raymond, August 10, 1944.

¹⁶⁰I.H., ibid., M.-L. Beaulieu to Maxime Raymond, August 22, 1944.

¹⁶¹Ibid.

¹⁶²Ibid.

CHAPTER VI

THE BLOC POPULAIRE IN THE 1945 FEDERAL ELECTION

The position of the Bloc Populaire following the 1944 provincial election was anything but strong. Its contribution to the campaign in terms of money, time, and energy had been heavy, but the party emerged from the election with little gain to show for its efforts. Nor was it certain how long the party would have to regroup its forces before facing another campaign, as some political observers predicted a federal election before the end of the year. Fortunately for the Bloc, Prime Minister Mackenzie King did not call the federal election until the following spring, and the Bloc was able to consolidate its forces to a considerable extent. However, in spite of the aggressive campaign conducted by the Bloc, the results of the June eleventh election were again disappointing. The Bloc elected only two candidates, one of whom was the party leader, Maxime Raymond. The failure of the Bloc Populaire to win any significant support from the Quebec electorate in the 1945 federal election once more cast serious doubts on the future of the party.

Whatever may have been the disappointment privately of the leaders of the Bloc Populaire following the provincial election, publicly they optimistically interpreted the results

of the August eighth election as a step towards success for their party. Noting that no party in the Legislative Assembly possessed a distinct majority, Maxime Raymond predicted that the Bloc representatives would have a great influence on the formulation of policy.¹ He called on party supporters to have confidence and to work towards expanding the cells of organization already in existence throughout the province. André Laurendeau predicted even more optimistically that the election of the four Bloc candidates was merely "le départ d'une vague de fond qui va déferler sur la province de Québec."² This same attitude was reflected editorially in Le Bloc on 12 August.³

For the Bloc Populaire the weeks following the August provincial election were ones of almost complete inactivity. Except for the continued publication of their newspaper, Le Bloc, the party remained silent. Le Bloc lost none of its verve after the election, continuing to comment on various issues in the news: reporting on the progress of the allies in France,⁴ criticizing the federal government's proposed plan for family allowances, and launching a scathing attack on Ontario's Premier George Drew following Drew's comments that Quebec, the province contributing the least to Canada's war effort, would profit the most from the federal government's family allowance plan.⁵ However, even Le Bloc showed signs of distress. Its August twenty-sixth edition carried an urgent appeal for subscribers, and at the end of September, editor Victor Trépanier resigned to be replaced by Léopold Richer, formerly of Le Droit and Le

Devoir.⁶

Provincially the political scene remained stable as control of the provincial government was transferred from Adélard Godbout to Maurice Duplessis on 30 August. Federally rumours continued as to possible dates for an election and also as to the various possible groups which would enter the contest. Particular interest centered on Sasseville Roy, independent federal member for Gaspé, and Frédéric Dorion, independent from Saguenay, who were rumoured to be planning a federal movement which, while claiming to be independent, would have hidden support from the Union Nationale.⁷ As Pierre Vigeant pointed out in Le Devoir on 4 October, Duplessis' attitude in the event of a federal election could be of critical importance to the Bloc Populaire.⁸ Although Duplessis continually protested that he had no interest in federal politics, his complete abstention in this instance would be to the advantage of the Bloc Populaire. Under the table intervention by the Union Nationale in the form of support to another independent group could seriously weaken the chances of the Bloc, and perhaps even lead to its demise. The disappearance of the Bloc Populaire would be more than welcome to the Union Nationale supporters who harboured considerable resentment over the Bloc's invasion of the provincial field.

The intentions of Dorion and Roy became clearer when they announced a "Congrès des Indépendents" at the Palais Montcalm in Quebec City on 25 October.⁹ About three hundred delegates

attended, among whom were several who had been former Union Nationale candidates provincially.¹⁰ Dorion and Roy denied any intention of forming a party; they only claimed to be making an effort to group opposition elements from Quebec in order to elect as many independent candidates as possible in the next federal election. Their goal was about forty independent members whom the government would be forced to consult for support. Frédéric Dorion was chosen as organizer for the Independents and the congress passed a number of resolutions indicating the legislation it would support federally.¹¹

The attitude which would be adopted by Arthur Cardin, former Liberal cabinet minister who had resigned over the introduction of conscription, in the event of a federal election also remained undefined, although the possibility of a coalition with Roy and Dorion was mentioned. It was also suggested that Camilien Houde, former Montreal mayor who had been released from internment in August, was interested in running for office federally. His triumphant arrival in Montreal on 18 August clearly indicated that his personal popularity remained as great as ever.¹² While Houde's decision to run again as mayor of Montreal and his election on 13 December somewhat stilled rumours about his federal intentions, his name continued to be mentioned as a possibility. Any of these elements presented a threat to the success of the Bloc Populaire federally, and an even worse danger lay in the possibility of a coalition of two or more of them.

Speculation over electoral alliances was quickly pushed aside on 1 November by the announcement that the Prime Minister had accepted the resignation of Defence Minister Ralston, who would be replaced by General Andrew McNaughton. While Le Bloc reflected that the naming of McNaughton as Minister of National Defence would moderately strengthen the position of the Liberals in Quebec, the newspaper was sceptical about whether it was still possible "d'avoir pleinement confiance dans un gouvernement qui s'est fait une triste spécialité de ne pas tenir ses promesses."¹³ Grudgingly, however, the newspaper conceded that it appeared that King was rejecting a policy of conscription. A week later, in view of King's radio broadcast on 8 November, the paper concluded that Mackenzie King was no less a conscriptionist than was Ralston -- they only differed in opinion on the immediate steps to be taken to solve the question of replacements.¹⁴

The beginning of November also marked the resumption of activity for the Bloc Populaire. On the fourth and fifth of November about four hundred and seventy-five party members gathered at the Windsor Hotel in Montreal for a caucus meeting.¹⁵ In addition to examining realistically the reasons for the poor showing of the Bloc Populaire in the August eighth election, the party also discussed several serious questions of organization and finance. One of the most important decisions taken by the party was to create a Bloc Populaire National Council which would possess extensive powers and share authority with the party leaders.¹⁶ A provisional council consisting of Raymond,

Laurendeau, and ten other Bloc members¹⁷ was chosen to write a constitution for the Council and to supervise its establishment. The caucus also approved the division of the province into about twenty zones of three or four constituencies, each zone to form a sort of regional organization. A series of regional conferences, beginning in the region comprised of Stanstead, Sherbrooke, Compton, and Wolfe, would be held. The Bloc members also discussed the possibility of extending this organization even further, right down to the level of each voting poll. A committee would be chosen for each polling area and each would send representatives to the regional committees. According to this plan the National Council would then consist of a delegate from each regional committee. Half of the Council would consist of Bloc members engaged in active politics, and half of members with no intention of ever running for election. This, it was explained, would maintain a balance between those members involved in the electoral activity and immediate electoral problems, and those members concerned with the long-range implementation of the party's platform.¹⁸

The caucus also discussed another perennial problem of the Bloc Populaire -- finances. In order to provide the \$200,000 estimated necessary to finance their upcoming federal campaign, the delegates approved the idea of a subscription campaign to raise the necessary funds. Financial questions were again dealt with when the caucus discussed the problems of the party's newspaper, Le Bloc, and the delegates were

reported to have contributed \$3000 on the spot to cover deficits of the newspaper.¹⁹ However, it was also resolved that every effort should be made to make Le Bloc self-supporting.

The possibility of reaching an agreement with the group of Independents lead by Frédéric Dorion was also raised at the caucus meeting by Emmanuel d'Anjou. Response from the delegates appears to have been unanimously against any formal alliance, although they were receptive to the possibility of unofficial co-operation at election time to prevent several third party candidates splitting the oppositionist vote in one constituency. At a press conference on Sunday, 5 November, Maxime Raymond repeated that the Bloc would enter no formal alliance with any other group, although, he added, the door was always open to those sincerely supporting the platform of the Bloc Populaire.²⁰

Following the caucus meeting in Montreal, the Bloc Populaire showed new determination to continue. Paul Massé, who had been appointed director of the Bloc subscription campaign, appealed over the radio for financial contributions which would free Bloc candidates from "cette invention diabolique qu'on appelle la caisse électorale."²¹ He also called on Bloc sympathizers in each constituency to start organizing immediately for the next federal election. The first regional Bloc congress was held at Sherbrooke on 21 November to discuss election preparation for the constituencies of Sherbrooke, Stanstead, Compton, Wolfe, and Richmond.²² Other regional meetings followed on the following weekends.

The Bloc, then, had already gained some momentum before the announcement by Prime Minister King on 23 November that sixteen thousand conscripted soldiers would be assigned duty over-seas. The party quickly mounted a protest campaign against the implementation of conscription. In a public statement in Le Devoir on 24 November, leader Maxime Raymond admitted that the Prime Minister's move had not surprised him, that he had predicted in 1939 that conscription would be the eventual outcome of participation in the war. Raymond concluded that it was merely a new proof of "la violation d'un de ses engagements les plus solennels jamais pris par un homme public."²³ André Laurendeau similarly stated:

M. King laisse tomber le masque. Il tourne complètement le dos à vingt-cinq ans de promesses. Il trahit définitivement les espoirs que le Québec plaçait jadis en lui.²⁴

Laurendeau also sent a telegram to Premier Duplessis calling for an immediate meeting of the Legislative Assembly in order to allow the provincial body "d'exprimer les vues de notre peuple et enregistrer sa protestation la plus indignée contre l'abus de pouvoirs dont nous sommes les victimes."²⁵

An official statement by the Bloc Populaire called on all Canadians to unite in "une protestation pacifique mais ferme."²⁶ In accordance with this appeal the Bloc joined other groups in organizing protest meetings throughout the province.²⁷ On 26 November protest meetings were held at Drummondville and Magog,²⁸ and on 29 November the party sponsored a large protest rally at the Marché Saint-Jacques in Montreal under the slogan

"La réponse à la conscription, c'est l'indépendence!"²⁹ Other meetings were also held in Montreal and in other centers such as Saint-Jean, Granby, Sherbrooke, and Marieville. On 2 December, André Laurendeau participated in an all-party protest meeting at Quebec City at which Wilfrid Lacroix, René Chaloult, and Ernest Grégoire also spoke.³⁰

On 30 November Maxime Raymond denounced the measure in the House of Commons. To accord the Prime Minister the vote of confidence requested on the issue, Raymond declared, would be a betrayal of the mandate given him by his electors. The Prime Minister "est autonome dans ses déclarations, mais impérialiste dans ses actes,"³¹ and those who posed the worst threat to Canadian unity were "ceux qui pensent en impérialistes plutôt qu'en Canadiens."³² Armand Choquette supported Raymond on 5 December in a speech which attributed the Prime Minister's actions, not to principle or political necessity, but to political opportunism.³³ On 10 December in a radio broadcast sponsored by the Bloc Populaire, André Laurendeau protested the imposition of a measure such as conscription on a minority by a hostile majority.³⁴

As December passed the outcry lessened, but the protest had served as an effective stimulus for the Bloc Populaire. As the New Year arrived it became increasingly apparent that the Bloc was preparing for a federal election. The party's newspaper emerged in January of 1945 with a new, expanded format. In addition to increasing the length from four to eight pages, several new features such as a labour column and an agricultural

column were added to Le Bloc.³⁵

Early in January 1945, André Laurendeau made the first Bloc speeches which might be considered part of the coming federal campaign. The first on 10 January was delivered in English and directed to the English-speaking voters. It was an attempt, Laurendeau stated, to explain the Bloc's provincial platform to the English-speaking electorate, since no coverage of the ideas of the new party had been provided by the English language press during the provincial election the previous August. He also added several comments on the federal platform of the Bloc Populaire, particularly emphasizing that its main objective was independence for Canada. On the issue of conscription Laurendeau told his English-speaking audience that the opposition of French Canadians to conscription constituted, more than anything else, a judgment on the nature of the war. He explained that, by participating in the war, French Canadians felt that they were not defending their own interests, but rather the interests of imperialism, and they rejected any sort of imperialism whether French, German, or English.³⁶ This speech was quickly followed by another on 12 January to the French Canadian voters, explaining the main points in the Canadian foreign policy proposed by the Bloc. Again the emphasis was on Canadian independence, an independence which would put the interests of Canada first, even to the extent of neutrality in a war which did not directly affect Canada.³⁷ This was an early indication that Canadian independence and the war would be major issues for

the Bloc Populaire in the coming federal election.

The federal election continued to be a favorite topic for speculation in the press. Le Devoir continued to support the idea of a federal party like the Bloc Populaire which would represent only Quebec, arguing that such a party would not only clearly voice Quebec's demands, but would also hopefully hold the balance of power and therefore bring influence to bear on proposed legislation.³⁸ Speculation also continued in Le Devoir as to the date which Mackenzie King would choose to face the electorate. On 31 January the House of Commons was prorogued until 28 February. In the meantime the Liberals could concentrate on the campaign in support of the new Minister of National Defence, General McNaughton, in the North Grey by-election on 7 February.

Not all indications were encouraging for the Bloc at this time. A meeting on 28 January of the Independents group organized by Dorion and Roy revealed the loss of two Bloc federal members to the newer group. Emmanuel d'Anjou, federal member for Rimouski who had rallied to the Bloc the preceding summer, appeared as a member of the group of Independents,³⁹ and it was announced that Dr. Pierre Gauthier, Bloc organizer for the district of Quebec, would leave the Bloc to join the Independents.⁴⁰

It was probably the loss of these members which caused Maxime Raymond to solicit once more the co-operation of Dr. Philippe Hamel in leading the Bloc's forces. Meeting with Hamel on 14 January, Raymond offered him the leadership of the Quebec district. In a letter to Hamel on 25 January the offer was

expanded to include the presidency of the Bloc's National Council.⁴¹ Both offers were declined by Hamel who was extremely sceptical of the chances of success for the Bloc:

Tout est mort, aujourd'hui, dans notre région. C'est la désorganisation totale. Le Bloc n'a plus de ressources financières, à ce que je comprends, et nous ne pouvons plus, comme lors de la fondation du Bloc, obtenir les services d'hommes de première valeur ... A l'heure présente, à moins d'évènements inespérés, je ne crois pas à aucune chance de réussite. Je ne crains pas la défaite, mais j'abhorre les luttes inutiles où nos amis dépensent, sans résultat pratique, et leurs énergies et leur argent.⁴²

Referring to Raymond's failure to trust him in the past, Hamel indicated little hope that Raymond would accept his judgment now. Hamel could also see few present members of the Bloc willing to support his ideas on economic reform. Hamel's comments certainly show little indication of strength in the Bloc Populaire. However, the Bloc could take some encouragement from the defeat of McNaughton in North Grey on 7 February. "Au fond, l'homme qui a été battu c'est beaucoup plus M. Mackenzie King que le général McNaughton," Léopold Richer observed in Le Bloc.⁴³

On 19 March Parliament met for another brief session. Prime Minister Mackenzie King indicated that only two measures would be brought before the members: the voting of provisional credits to provide financing of the war effort and of the usual government expenses; and the approval of Canadian participation in the conference to be held at San Francisco to discuss the establishment of an international peace organization. During the following debate Maxime Raymond stated his party's position on both issues. While approving of Canada's participation in

the San Francisco conference,⁴⁴ Maxime Raymond protested against further expenditure on the war effort in either Europe or Asia. Particularly in Europe, he argued, the war was almost over and Canada had done more than her share. Raymond called instead for an immediate cessation of enlistments and a suspension of the law for conscription for duty over-seas.⁴⁵ During the vote on provisional expenditures, both Raymond and Choquette voted in favour of an amendment to the Liberal bill which had been proposed by Frédéric Dorion, stating that no more money be spent on the war effort and calling for the abrogation of the order-in-council authorizing conscription for duty over-seas. The amendment was defeated by one hundred and twenty-four votes to nine.⁴⁶ Following this the bill authorizing the government funds was passed. Now provided with the necessary funds to maintain government expenditures until a new parliament met, King on 13 April announced the federal general election for 11 June.

The announcement found the political situation in Quebec still in considerable confusion, with numerous rumours predicting a variety of alliances among the opposition groups. On 16 April a Bloc statement denied any knowledge of a coalition of opposition groups, but,

... M. King, ayant déclenché les élections, le Bloc Populaire affrontera l'électorat en présentant des candidats en nombre suffisant pour permettre à tous les Canadiens d'exprimer leur foi dans l'idéal du Bloc.⁴⁷

A few days later, on 20 April, a story appeared in Le Devoir reporting that an alliance had finally been reached between

Cardin and the group of Independents led by Frédéric Dorion. Actually, the paper claimed, it was more of an absorption of the Dorion group by Cardin, as Dorion would have little voice in the choosing of candidates to represent the combined forces. In addition, Le Devoir predicted that the organizer of the new group would be Oscar Drouin.⁴⁸ While Le Devoir felt that no alliance would be formed between the Cardin-Dorion group and the Bloc Populaire, it did not discount the possibility of an understanding on a division of constituencies between the two movements: "on peut prévoir un front commun contre le parti libéral ..."⁴⁹ Three days later the newspaper again commented that a common front between Cardin's forces and the Bloc Populaire remained "dans le domaine des choses possibles et même probables."⁵⁰ Although the Bloc Populaire continued to deny the possibility of an alliance, Le Devoir maintained that there seemed to be no insurmountable obstacles to a more or less implicit agreement which would avoid the division and weakening of opposition forces.

The confusion was increased when Montreal mayor Camilien Houde announced that he would also be a candidate in the federal elections as the leader of a provincially based group.⁵¹ Houde's statement of 25 April provided few particulars on the composition of the party other than indicating that it would not be part of any existing group. However, Houde's remark that it would oppose those who had supported the "yes" vote during the plebiscite seemed to eliminate the possibility of an alliance with Cardin.

Although the Bloc Populaire refused comment on Houde's announcement, Le Devoir again predicted that negotiations would take place to prevent the opposition of Bloc and Houde candidates.⁵²

However, a few days later two events reduced by half the number of contending groups. On 27 April Frédéric Dorion confirmed the story which had appeared in Le Devoir a week earlier by announcing that he was discontinuing his activity in the group of Independents in order that Cardin could profit from wider support.⁵³ The same day the Bloc Populaire announced that Camilien Houde would support the Bloc forces in the coming campaign. The story which appeared in the press the following day revealed that Houde had accepted "la direction conjointe" of the Bloc Populaire. The Montreal mayor declared that he was honoured to lead the Bloc's campaign with Raymond since "nous avons les mêmes aspirations et nous poursuivons le même but."⁵⁴ Raymond's statement welcomed Houde's collaboration and called for unity among all those who opposed the government's policies. Raymond explained that Houde's assistance was particularly valuable since Raymond himself for health reasons was incapable of travelling throughout the province to defend the ideas of the Bloc Populaire.⁵⁵ Houde's announcement reduced the splinter groups to two, the Bloc Populaire and Cardin's Front National. While several candidates rallied to the Front National, including the former members of the group of Independents, Cardin finally announced on 8 May that he too was abandoning the idea of a general movement. He had discarded as an illusion any idea of

uniting the people of Quebec, his statement read, and in order to "ne pas contribuer à l'aggravation de nos malheureuses divisions," he had decided to limit his activities in the election to his own constituency.⁵⁶ Although a number of independent candidates remained in contention, Cardin's withdrawal left the Bloc Populaire as the only organized opposition group in Quebec.

The campaign in Quebec began slowly. Only the Liberal party seemed well-prepared for the coming contest. Some Liberal candidates had been nominated as early as the preceding fall, and the party quickly went ahead with the rest of its nominations. The Bloc's first candidate was chosen the first week in April when Marcel Poulin was nominated in Laurier-St. Denis.⁵⁷ By 20 April only six candidates were chosen, and this included Maxime Raymond in Beauharnois-Laprairie and the re-nomination of Armand Choquette in Stanstead.⁵⁸ However, the last week in April and the first two weeks in May saw a number of Bloc nomination meetings held, so that the party listed thirty-five candidates when nominations closed on 14 May.⁵⁹ Camilien Houde chose to run in Montreal-Sainte-Marie although both the constituencies of Saint-Henri and Saint-Jacques had indicated their willingness to accept his candidature. Familiar names from the Bloc which appeared on the candidate list included Fernand Chaussé in Montreal-Mercier, Jacques Sauriol in Montreal-Maisonnette, Paul Massé in Montreal-Cartier, and Michel Chartrand in Chambly-Rouville. Roger Duhamel, the president of the Saint-Jean-Baptiste Society in Montreal and a journalist with La Patrie, represented the Bloc in Montreal-Saint Jacques. The

Bloc also contested the two Ontario ridings of Nipissing and Prescott. In addition to its own candidates, the Bloc also named several independent candidates whom they did not oppose, or who were actually supported by Camilien Houde. These included Ernest Grégoire in Dorchester, Jean François Pouliot in Temiscouata, J.-S. Roy in Gaspé, Wilfrid Lacroix in Quebec-Montmorency, Liguori Lacombe in Laval-Deux Montagnes, and Emmanuel d'Anjou in Rimouski.⁶⁰ Dr. Pierre Gauthier, left without party affiliation with the dissolution of the group of Independents, returned to the Liberal fold as a Liberal candidate in his old constituency of Portneuf.⁶¹

The 1945 federal election saw more candidates in the running than ever before in Quebec. A total of two hundred and ninety-four candidates contested the sixty-five Quebec seats. The greatest number, seventy-two, were independents. While the Liberals listed only fifty-eight candidates, in the remaining seven constituencies where no official Liberal candidate was nominated, a former Liberal member was in the race either as an independent Liberal or simply as an independent. The Social Credit party nominated forty-two candidates, the Conservatives twenty-nine, the C.C.F. twenty-eight, and there were seven candidates running as Labour-Progressives. Throughout the province there were only two constituencies where there were only two candidates, and the extreme of proliferation of candidates was represented in Verdun where a total of eleven candidates vied for the seat.⁶²

In spite of the numerous nominations the campaign began

slowly. The Liberal party began holding campaign meetings around the first week in May.⁶³ The capitulation of Germany on 7 May provided a considerable advantage to them as they could now claim that the war in Europe had ended. Prime Minister King outlined his main arguments in a country-wide radio broadcast from Vancouver the evening of 16 May. He remarked that the location from which he was delivering the speech, so close to Japan, was significant, for he reminded the voters that the war with Japan was not over. Until militarist Japan shared the same fate as Nazi Germany, he pledged, the war effort would be untiringly carried on.⁶⁴ However, his main arguments in requesting a renewed mandate from the voters were based on his past accomplishments, not on promises for the future. King pointed with pride to the war effort of Canada and to the international stature gained by Canada as a result of co-operation with other nations. The Liberal party had proven itself, he declared, through its leadership of the country during the last five difficult years. It was this proven experience that was now required to head the Canadian government through the next stages of concluding the peace in Europe, continuing the war with Japan, and representing Canada at the San Francisco conference for an international peace organization. In domestic affairs, too, King pointed out, the Liberal party, through its social legislation, had proven itself prepared to provide social security for post-war Canada.⁶⁵ The Liberals emphasized their past record as their best recommendation for re-election.

The Bloc Populaire found itself in the rather unusual

position of a acquiring new leader, if only a co-leader -Camilien Houde- right at the beginning of a campaign. As a result, the first part of May saw several meetings between Houde and various Bloc regional and constituency organizations.⁶⁶ Houde also met with a group of Bloc members in Quebec City at the Palais Montcalm in what was called "une prise de contact" between Houde and the Bloc activists in that area.⁶⁷

The Bloc Populaire first opened its campaign in the pages of its newspaper, Le Bloc. Since February the newspaper had discussed various aspects of the Bloc's federal platform in a column entitled, "Le programme fédéral du Bloc."⁶⁸ This column afforded the party the chance to comment at some length on various aspects of their federal policy such as Canadian independence, immigration, international relations, trade and economics, and provincial autonomy. However, it soon became apparent that one single issue dominated the Bloc's campaign -- conscription and the Canadian war effort. As Jean Drapeau capsulized the issues in the May seventeenth issue of Le Bloc, the choice was clear:

D'un côté, le gouvernement libéral de M. King avec sa politique de guerre, ses budgets exagérés, la conscription pour outre-mer, des dons de milliards à l'Angleterre, et de l'autre côté, le Bloc Populaire Canadien avec la neutralité au pays, son opposition à la conscription, ses protestations contre les cadeaux à l'Angleterre et contre les budgets de guerre.⁶⁹

This same theme was repeated by Roger Duhamel during a radio broadcast on 17 May. The choice for French Canadians was between the Liberals, "qui se réclament de toutes les erreurs et de tous les reniements passés," and the candidates of the Bloc Populaire, who presented "une politique virile, honnête,

courageuse, chrétienne, fondée sur les données fondamentales de la vie canadienne."⁷⁰

The Bloc campaign really got under way around mid-May. Jacques Sauriol was one of the first to open his campaign in Maisonneuve-Rosemont on 13 May,⁷¹ and the pace quickly accelerated for all Bloc candidates. Camilien Houde opened his campaign in Sainte-Marie on 20 May with the announcement that the election was "la reddition des comptes" between Quebec and Mackenzie King.⁷² "Nous allons faire la bilan," Houde declared, "et comme dans toutes les comptabilités mal tenues, vous verrez que le bilan est écrit en rouge."⁷³ He went on to condemn the policy adopted by the Liberals throughout the war and urged his audience that it was time to register their protest.

The Bloc campaign itself opened on 24 May with a large rally at the Marché Atwater in Montreal.⁷⁴ In the tradition of previous Bloc rallies in Montreal, an enthusiastic, over-capacity crowd gathered to hear Maxime Raymond, André Laurendeau, and the Bloc's new co-leader, Camilien Houde. Again the speakers concentrated almost completely on the issue of the war. André Laurendeau declared that the time had come to judge the party which for years had made political capital of its opposition to conscription in the First World War, and which had then done a complete about-face and imposed conscription itself.⁷⁵ Raymond denounced "la politique impérialiste ruineuse" of the federal Liberals and, in referring to the introduction of conscription by the Prime Minister, declared, "Jamais homme public n'a eu

autant de mépris pour la province de Québec."⁷⁶ Camilien Houde was the final speaker of the evening, and the enthusiastic response which greeted his review of the broken promises of the Liberal cabinet members indicated that the Bloc supporters warmly welcomed him to the party.

Raymond opened his own campaign in Beauharnois-Laprairie at Valleyfield on Sunday afternoon, 27 May.⁷⁷ Accompanied by Camilien Houde who also spoke, Raymond made his first appeal as a member of the Bloc Populaire to the voters who, since 1925, had elected him as a Liberal. He declared that he had had no alternative but to separate from the Liberal party if he were to remain faithful to the mandate conferred on him by his voters. His defeat, he announced, "ce serait approuver les violations des promesses."⁷⁸ The war again was the major topic discussed. Referring to the war against Japan, Raymond developed a theme which would frequently appear during the Bloc campaign. He warned the audience that, although Prime Minister King and the Liberals now declared that service in Japan would be on a voluntary basis only, there, as in Europe, conscription would soon be applied.

Maxime Raymond made no appearances outside his own constituency other than the opening rally in Montreal. Camilien Houde was the principal figure in the Bloc campaign, relentlessly covering the province.⁷⁹ André Laurendeau was also an active campaigner, although the sittings of the Legislature until 1 June at first limited his campaigning to the weekends. The Bloc concentrated its efforts on rallies and meetings and, in

comparison with the provincial campaign the preceding summer, sponsored few radio broadcasts.

The issue of the war solidly dominated the campaign of the Bloc Populaire. The Bloc candidates attacked the Liberals for having betrayed Quebec in imposing conscription and predicted that conscription would again be applied for the war in Japan.⁸⁰ Although the war in Europe was over, the Bloc maintained that no great victory for freedom had been won, that while Hitler had been defeated, a worse danger had been created in the expansion of Communist Russia.⁸¹ The Bloc maintained that Canada had severely suffered as a result of its participation in the war, and declared that the only way to prevent the repetition of such a disaster was the realization of full Canadian independence. It was time for Canada to shed the vestiges of British colonialism and become a truly independent nation, the party declared.⁸²

The other aspects of the Bloc federal platform were not ignored, but they received considerably less exposure. In discussing Canadian independence, Bloc candidates included the party's demands for a distinctive national flag and anthem, and pressed for Canadian membership in the Pan American Union.⁸³ The party also emphasized the economic policies which it advocated, declaring its opposition to the influence of foreign capital on the Canadian economy and its support for a greater diversification of Canadian trade.⁸⁴ While the party's support of provincial autonomy and its demands for equality of rights for both French and English-speaking Canadians were mentioned, neither topic assumed any prominence in the campaign. However,

the economic and social problems which would face post-war Canada did receive considerable attention. In particular, the Bloc continued the campaign which it had begun in the preceding provincial election for family allowances designed to adequately benefit Quebec's large families.⁸⁵

Camilien Houde campaigned largely on the issue of the government's war policy and the imposition of conscription. He became little involved in any of the other aspects of the Bloc platform. Much of Houde's campaigning assumed a highly personal note, with considerable emphasis on his four years of internment by the federal authorities. In many cases, it was highly likely that it was "le p'tit gars de Sainte-Marie" more than the Bloc Populaire who received such an enthusiastic response from his audiences.⁸⁶ However, Houde declared his complete support for the Bloc, and at the conclusion of the campaign optimistically predicted that the Bloc Populaire would take the election in Quebec. "Jamais," declared the Montreal mayor in reference to the Liberal party, "je n'ai vu un parti qui fut jadis grand, tomber si bas dans cette province."⁸⁷

The Liberal party made much of Mackenzie King's claim that only volunteers would be used in the war in the Pacific, particularly contrasting their stand on this issue to John Bracken and the Conservative party's demand for the application of conscription for the war in Japan.⁸⁸ Never strong in Quebec, the Conservative party's firm support of provincial autonomy in Quebec during this election did little to offset their continued support of conscription.

The election results of 11 June did not substantiate Camilien Houde's optimistic prediction of the downfall of the Liberal party. The Liberals maintained their hold on the province. At dissolution the party claimed forty-six Quebec members. They re-elected forty-five, giving them a comfortable majority of the province's sixty-five seats.⁸⁹ The Bloc Populaire's hopes of electing a sizeable number of members were crushed. The party elected only two members: Maxime Raymond in Beauharnois-Laprairie, who was returned with a drastically reduced margin of votes;⁹⁰ and René Hamel in Sainte-Marie-Laflèche, who defeated his closest rival, an Independent Liberal, by less than a thousand votes. While Bloc candidates placed second in fifteen constituencies, in most instances they polled only half or less than half of the number of votes of the winning candidate. Several prominent Bloc candidates went down to defeat, including Mayor Camilien Houde in Montreal-Sainte-Marie. Houde was defeated by a conscriptionnist Liberal, Dr. Gaspard Fauteux, by approximately four thousand votes. In Stanstead, the location of the Bloc's victory in the 1943 by-election, Bloc incumbent Armand Choquette was closely defeated by Conservative John Hackett.⁹¹ While the results indicate that the Bloc proved slightly more of a threat in the constituencies of Montreal, the party did not succeed in winning the support of either the rural or urban voters to any appreciable degree.

The Bloc offered little official comment on the results of the election. According to its official newspaper, Le Bloc,

the people of Quebec had voted for the Liberals to avoid a Conservative government:

Les libéraux, grâce à leur presse et à leur radio ... ont réussi à arracher un vote d'une portée purement négative. La population a beaucoup moins voté en leur faveur que contre Bracken et la menace tory, habituellement exploitée à la suite du succès électoral de M. Drew en Ontario. Le vote du Québec est donc avant tout un vote contre les conservateurs.⁹²

While the bogey of a Conservative government in power had probably influenced many Quebec voters, other reasons were equally significant to the poor showing of the Bloc Populaire. In June of 1945 the party was once again limited in campaign funds and weak in organization, even more so than it had been a year earlier. Although nominating only thirty-five candidates, the resources of the party were insufficient to sustain aggressive campaigns in these constituencies.⁹³ Nor had the party within the last year been able to maintain an image of stability and strength which would build confidence among the voters. Public confidence in the Bloc, first shaken by the departure of the trio in 1944, was no doubt further weakened by the defection of Bloc members such as Dr. Pierre Gaughier, Emmanuel d'Anjou, and Edouard Lacroix, who had resigned his provincial seat on 15 May for health reasons.⁹⁴

The participation of Montreal mayor Camilien Houde in the Bloc campaign does not seem to have strengthened the electoral chances of the Bloc Populaire to any extent. Houde's own defeat in the Montreal constituency of Sainte-Marie indicated that his personal popularity was not enough to dislodge

the Liberal incumbent. In some areas the participation of Houde was poorly received.⁹⁵ Many Bloc supporters had no confidence in Houde and felt that his association with the party cast doubt on the Bloc's commitment to its reform platform and left the party open to charges of political opportunism.

Another significant factor was undoubtedly the number of candidates contesting the election in each constituency. The splitting of the vote between Bloc, independent, and Social Credit candidates decreased the chances of the third parties and reinforced the advantage of the Liberals. The independent candidates no doubt received many votes which might otherwise have gone to the Bloc Populaire.⁹⁶

However, the key factor was the failure of the Bloc Populaire to win support for its campaign based on the emotional issues of conscription and Canadian involvement in the war. No doubt the fall of Germany during the opening phase of the campaign dampened much of the party's ammunition. More important, though, the re-election of the Liberal conscriptionnists, the defeat of Choquette in Stanstead, and the narrow victory of Raymond in Beauharnois-Laprairie indicate that conscription and the war were no longer crucial issues for the French Canadian voter. The Bloc had been unable to rally the "non" of the plebiscite to which it had made an appeal. The Bloc Populaire had originally developed out of the 1942 movement to oppose conscription for over-seas service; the passing of the conscription crisis, the end of the war in Europe, and the poor showing of the Bloc in the 1945 federal election raised serious

doubts as to the ability of the Bloc to sustain its activity and organization in the post-war period. The rapid decline of the Bloc Populaire over the next two years proved that these doubts were well founded.

FOOTNOTES FOR CHAPTER VI

¹Le Devoir, August 10, 1944, p. 3. Also in Le Bloc, August 12, 1944, p. 1.

²Le Devoir, August 9, 1944, p. 4. Also in Le Bloc, August 12, 1944, p. 1.

³Le Bloc, August 12, 1944, p. 1.

⁴Le Bloc was particularly concerned that the Allies now accord a position of equality to liberated France, and showed strong reservations about developments in France as the country became liberated. "Si ce sont les rois du maquis qui gouvernent la France, où allons-nous? Désirons-nous vraiment la dictature des gars du milieu?" it inquired. "Comment s'étonner, dans ces conditions, que des Français s'inquiètent de l'entrée de ces troupes alliées qui ont favorisé ces soulèvements d'une plèbe douteuse? Par manque de vision, par étroitesse d'esprit, par partialité idéologique, il serait fort attristant que les Français en viennent à ne pas distinguer très clairement entre l'occupation et la libération." Le Bloc, August 12, 1944, p. 7.

⁵Commenting on Drew's statement, Paul Laliberté wrote in Le Bloc: "Les excès de langage d'un Drew sont révélateurs d'une vaste conspiration anti-canadienne-française. On veut en finir une bonne fois avec ces mauvais coucheurs qui persistent à être catholiques, à parler français, à élever des familles nombreuses, et à croire qu'il y a dans la vie un autre idéal que de chanter "God Save the King" devant l'Union Jack largement déployé!" Le Bloc, August 19, 1944, p. 6. Editor Léopold Richer later referred to Premier Drew as a "mental case." Le Bloc, October 14, 1944, p. 2.

⁶Le Bloc, September 30, 1944, p. 1.

⁷Rumilly, op. cit., XLI, 135.

⁸Le Devoir, October 4, 1944, p. 1.

⁹Le Devoir, October 26, 1944, p. 3.

¹⁰Rumilly, op. cit., XLI, p. 139.

¹¹Many of the resolutions passed by the Independents strongly resembled the federal platform of the Bloc Populaire: a Canadian foreign policy based on Canada's location in North America rather than Europe; adoption of a national flag; the

right for Canada, with the consent of the provinces, to amend her own constitution; respect of provincial autonomy; realization of bilingualism; opposition to "la dictature économique," etc. Rumilly, op. cit., XLI, 139.

¹²Le Devoir, August 19, 1944, p. 3.

¹³Le Bloc, November 11, 1944, p. 8.

¹⁴Le Bloc, November 18, 1944, p. 8.

¹⁵Le Devoir, November 6, 1944, p. 3. Also in Le Bloc, November 11, 1944, p. 11.

¹⁶Le Devoir, November 6, 1944, p. 3. The formation of a National Council resembling that of the C.C.F. was reported to be in response to a questionnaire sent out to Bloc supporters asking how they felt the Bloc organization could be rendered more effective. However, both Bloc leaders were also reported to be in complete accord with the idea.

¹⁷Ibid. The other members of the provisional council were M.-L. Beaulieu, Pierre Letarte, Dr. J.-B. Prince, Léopold Richer, Paul Massé, Eugène Therrien, Marcel Poulin, J.-N. Désy, Antonin Gagnon, Dollard Brisson.

¹⁸Ibid.

¹⁹Ibid.

²⁰Ibid.

²¹Le Devoir, November 20, 1944, p. 2.

²²Le Devoir, November 22, 1944, p. 2.

²³Le Devoir, November 24, 1944, p. 2.

²⁴Le Devoir, November 24, 1944, p. 2.

²⁵Le Devoir, November 25, 1944, p. 3. Rather than convoking the Legislative Assembly, Duplessis and his cabinet introduced an order-in-council calling for the respect of the promises made to Quebec on the question of conscription, and protesting the way in which the federal government had broken its promises to the province.

²⁶Le Devoir, November 27, 1944, p. 3.

²⁷The Independent group lead by Sasseville Roy and Frédéric Dorion also organized protest meetings, and those to speak at

various meetings throughout the province included René Chaloult, Dr. Philippe Hamel, Ernest Grégoire, and Arthur Cardin.

²⁸Le Bloc, December 7, 1944, p. 5.

²⁹Le Devoir, November 30, 1944, p. 2.

³⁰Le Devoir, December 4, 1944, p. 7.

³¹House of Commons Debates, 1944, Vol. VI, p. 6946.

³²Ibid., p. 6948.

³³Ibid., p. 7053.

³⁴Le Devoir, December 12, 1944, p. 4.

³⁵Le Bloc, January 4, 1945.

³⁶Le Devoir, January 11, 1945, p. 3.

³⁷Le Devoir, January 15, 1945, p. 6.

³⁸Le Devoir, January 18, 1945, p. 1.

³⁹On October 14, 1944, Le Bloc denied a story which had appeared in Le Droit on 27 September reporting that d'Anjou had left the Bloc at that time to join the group of Independents. Le Bloc, October 14, 1944, p. 4.

⁴⁰Le Devoir, January 29, 1945, p. 2. According to Robert Rumilly, Dr. Pierre Gauthier's change of party allegiance had been prompted primarily by his defeat as a Bloc candidate in Portneuf in the provincial election of August, 1944. Gauthier had resigned his federal seat in the same constituency to contest the provincial election as a Bloc candidate. Rumilly, op. cit., XLL, 177.

⁴¹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Imbroglia: Correspondance, Maxime Raymond to Philippe Hamel, January 25, 1945.

⁴²I.H., ibid., Imbroglia Correspondance, P. Hamel to M. Raymond, February 1, 1945. Hamel placed the blame for the Bloc's difficulties squarely on Raymond's shoulders: "Trop confiant en votre jugement personnel, vous avez choisi les moyens qui conduisaient à l'échec."

⁴³Le Bloc, February 8, 1945, p. 1.

⁴⁴House of Commons Debates, 1945, Vol. I, pp. 280-285.

⁴⁵Ibid., pp. 703-706.

⁴⁶Rumilly, op. cit., XLI, 217.

⁴⁷Le Devoir, April 16, 1945, p. 3.

⁴⁸Le Devoir, April 20, 1945, p. 3.

⁴⁹Ibid.

⁵⁰Le Devoir, April 23, 1945, p. 3.

⁵¹Le Devoir, April 25, 1945, p. 3, 8.

⁵²Le Devoir, April 25, 1945, p. 3.

⁵³Le Devoir, April 27, 1945, p. 12.

⁵⁴Le Devoir, April 28, 1945, p. 3.

⁵⁵Ibid.

⁵⁶Le Devoir, May 9, 1945, p. 3.

⁵⁷Le Devoir, April 5, 1945, p. 7.

⁵⁸Le Devoir, April 20, 1945, p. 3.

⁵⁹Le Devoir, May 14, 1945, p. 3.

⁶⁰D'Anjou declared himself as an independent candidate supporting the platform and leaders of the Bloc Populaire. Le Devoir, May 11, 1945, p. 3. However, Le Bloc included him in the list of Bloc candidates.

⁶¹According to Robert Rumilly, Gauthier was without funds for his campaign and could no longer count on the help of Edouard Lacroix. Rumilly comments that in deciding to run as a Liberal, Gauthier had "un peu de réconfort cependant à la pensée de la tête que Maxime Raymond va faire." Rumilly, op. cit., XLI, 243.

⁶²Le Devoir, May 15, 1945, p. 6.

⁶³Le Devoir, May 7, 1945, p. 7.

⁶⁴Le Devoir, May 17, 1945, p. 10.

⁶⁵Ibid.

⁶⁶Le Devoir, May 5, 1945, p. 3.

⁶⁷Le Devoir, May 7, 1945, p. 3.

⁶⁸The regular author of this column was Pierre Martineau.

⁶⁹Le Bloc, May 17, 1945, p. 12.

⁷⁰Le Devoir, May 18, 1945, p. 9.

⁷¹Le Devoir, May 14, 1945, p. 8.

⁷²Le Devoir, May 21, 1945, p. 6. Also appearing with Houde were Marcel Poulin and Roger Duhamel.

⁷³Ibid.

⁷⁴Le Devoir, May 25, 1945, p. 6.

⁷⁵Ibid.

⁷⁶Ibid.

⁷⁷Le Devoir, May 28, 1945, p. 2.

⁷⁸Ibid.

⁷⁹Le Devoir, June 9, 1945, p. 3. According to Houde's own count, he made fifty-two speeches in three weeks.

⁸⁰Le Devoir, May 25, 1945, p. 6.

⁸¹Le Devoir, May 14, 1945, p. 10.

⁸²Le Devoir, May 29, 1945, p. 2.

⁸³Ibid.

⁸⁴Le Devoir, June 2, 1945, p. 4.

⁸⁵Le Devoir, May 30, 1945, p. 4.

⁸⁶Houde's reception was not always enthusiastic. At a meeting at a park in Sorel a group of about twenty demonstrators tried to disrupt Houde's gathering. They first tried disturbing the meeting with noise, then broke the wires, leading to the loudspeakers. Finally they tried pelting the speakers stand with tomatoes, before being driven away by the spectators. Le Devoir, June 11, 1945, p. 10.

⁸⁷Le Devoir, June 8, 1945, p. 10.

⁸⁸Rumilly, op. cit., XLI, 248.

⁸⁹Le Devoir, June 13, 1945, p. 8.

⁹⁰Ibid. Raymond was elected by over a 7000 vote margin in 1940. In 1945 the margin was reduced to slightly over 400.

⁹¹Ibid.

⁹²Le Bloc, June 13, 1945, p. 1.

⁹³One defeated candidate suggested that it would have been better to have concentrated the party's resources on only a few constituencies, a plan apparently discussed during a meeting of Bloc members in Montreal. I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Election 11 juin 1945, J.-B. Michaud to Maxime Raymond, June 13, 1945.

⁹⁴Le Devoir, May 15, 1945, p. 3.

⁹⁵I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Election 11 juin 1945, R. Richard to Maxime Raymond, June 13, 1945.

⁹⁶Le Devoir, June 13, 1945, p. 8. Independent candidates elected included: Frédéric Dorion in Charlevoix-Saguenay, Bona Arseneault in Bonaventure, W. Gariépy in Trois Rivières, P.E. Gagnon in Chicoutimi, Liguori Lacombe in Laval-Deux Montagnes. Bloc candidates claimed that many of the independent candidates had considerable support from the Union Nationale organization. I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Election 11 juin 1945, R. Richard to Maxime Raymond, June 13, 1945.

EPILOGUE

Although the Bloc Populaire during the first half of 1945 concentrated its greatest energies on the federal general election, it did not neglect its provincial interests. The Bloc members who had been elected to the provincial Legislature in August 1944 were particularly active, aggressively representing the Bloc Populaire in the Legislative Assembly in Quebec City. The Bloc delegation was not large: led by André Laurendeau (Montreal-Laurier), it also included Albert Lemieux (Beauharnois) and Ovila Bergeron (Stanstead). The fourth elected Bloc member, Edouard Lacroix, from the Beauce, never assumed his seat in the Assembly and resigned for reasons of health on 15 May 1945.¹ However, in spite of the limited size of its representation, the views of the Bloc Populaire were more than adequately defended during the 1945 session.

Prior to the opening of the Legislative Assembly on 7 February, provincial leader André Laurendeau defined the position his party would adopt during the coming session. The Bloc would conclude no alliances in the Legislature, he declared, and would refrain from "toute hostilité systématique" against any party.² Each measure would be judged according to its merits and the Bloc members would act accordingly.

André Laurendeau provided vigorous leadership for the Bloc Populaire in the Legislative Assembly. His maiden speech in the debate on the Speech from the Throne apparently created a favourable impression in the Legislature and the press.³ His address was primarily concerned with succinctly presenting the main points of the Bloc's provincial platform and with emphasizing what the Bloc considered to be the crucial issue of the session -- provincial autonomy. Laurendeau commented only briefly on his party's attitude towards the legislative programme of the Union Nationale:

Quand il s'agit de la primauté de la personne, d'une politique familiale, de la défense de l'autonomie provinciale, je ne saurais faire autre chose que d'y reconnaître quelques-uns des principes directeurs de notre mouvement.⁴

In those instances the Bloc would fully support the legislation proposed by the Union Nationale. He credited the electoral support shown the Bloc Populaire to the voters' dissatisfaction over the excessive war effort, their discontent with the economic dictatorship which still enslaved the province, and their rejection of policies which encouraged slums, anti-familial salaries, and the excessive taxation of small property owners. The Bloc would correct these abuses, Laurendeau asserted, by providing a government concerned only with the needs of the people. In order to accomplish this an instrument was necessary:

... la souveraineté de l'Etat du Québec à l'intérieur de la Confédération. C'est-à-dire un véritable Etat où nous sommes la majorité et où par conséquent nous pouvons nous doter de lois conformes à nos intérêts et à notre idéal.⁵

This French Canadian state could be created only through the realization of full provincial autonomy, and Laurendeau called on the Union Nationale to reclaim from the federal government those prerogatives in the areas of taxation and social legislation rightly belonging to the provinces.

During the sessions that followed, the Bloc members voted in favour of a number of measures which, they judged, corresponded to the platform of the Bloc Populaire. The Bloc voted in support of the Union Nationale bills to establish a provincial plan for family allowances,⁶ to establish a provincial broadcasting corporation in Quebec,⁷ and to encourage rural electrification.⁸ They opposed the Union Nationale's move to abolish the medical health insurance commission established in 1943, calling it a retrograde step, and voted with the Liberal opposition against it.⁹ They also voted against government bills to replace the provincial sales tax with a luxury tax on select items¹⁰ and to provide for the government take-over of Montreal Light, Heat, and Power.¹¹ In the latter instance, the Bloc voted against the government because of specific clauses in the bill, not because of the principle involved, which it supported. The Bloc members also voted for René Chaloult's motion condemning the introduction of conscription for duty over-seas,¹² and introduced several bills of their own. One bill, introduced by Lemieux, proposed the abolition of appeals to the Privy Council,¹³ while André Laurendeau introduced a motion calling for legal charters and government support for the co-operative movement.¹⁴

By the time the Legislative Assembly was adjourned on 1 June the Bloc Populaire members had clearly illustrated their intention of vigorously representing the views of their party. André Laurendeau was particularly active, presenting a total of thirty-five speeches during the session.¹⁵ The party had also honoured its pledge not to favour any one party. On thirty-eight registered votes the Bloc members voted for the government thirteen times and against twenty-four times. Nine times the Bloc voted in support of bills presented by the Union Nationale government, seven times against.¹⁶ In view of their limited members, the Bloc Populaire members established a more than credible record during their first session of the Legislative Assembly.

However, even the enthusiasm of the provincial session could not compensate for the disappointment of the results of the 1945 federal election, which, in the words of the Bloc executive, "nous laissa une caisse vide, et beaucoup de lassitude dans nos rangs."¹⁷ Although the Bloc constituency organizations held several meetings over the summer to honour their Bloc candidates in the preceding election, signs of distress within the party soon appeared. A meeting on 16 September of the shareholders of *Orientation Nouvelle*, the publisher of the party's newspaper Le Bloc, announced the discontinuation of the publication of the paper.¹⁸ Although in July André Laurendeau indicated the Bloc's readiness for a provincial general election,¹⁹ the party did not nominate a candidate when Premier Duplessis

announced a by-election in the Beauce for 21 November to fill the Legislative vacancy left by the resignation of Edouard Lacroix in May. Its position was one of "neutralité sans bienveillance," André Laurendeau explained,²⁰ although Le Bloc on 8 August more aggressively complained that the resignation of Lacroix had been negotiated by the Union Nationale.²¹ The newspaper claimed that the Union Nationale had supported Charles Lacroix in the June federal election on the express condition that his brother Edouard resign provincially to leave the way clear for a ministerial candidate. "On voulait donner un croc-en-jambe au Bloc Populaire Canadien," Le Bloc concluded.²² Not only did the Bloc abstain from the campaign in the Beauce but two former Bloc members, Raymond Beaudet, Bloc candidate in Arthabaska in the 1944 provincial election,²³ and Victor Trépanier, former editor of Le Bloc, campaigned for the Union Nationale candidate, Octave Poulin.²⁴ The Bloc compensated partially for its abstention in the Beauce by scheduling two regional congresses in October and November, and by sponsoring a two-day convention and a banquet in Montreal on 17 and 18 November to mark the third anniversary of the Bloc Populaire.²⁵ The guest of honour at the banquet on 18 November was leader Maxime Raymond, who, it was noted, was also celebrating twenty years as a member of Parliament. Raymond, in acknowledging the tribute from the party, paid homage to Henri Bourassa whose ideas had served as an inspiration for this career, and emphatically declared that the Bloc was a permanent movement

still needed as much in 1945 as it had been in 1942.²⁶

However, the Bloc Populaire did not succeed in re-animating its forces after 1945. The period was described by the Bloc executive as "l'année 1945-46 où le problème consista à durer, et où nous avons vécu un moment d'arrêt."²⁷ As a result of the prolonged inactivity of the Bloc Populaire, its executive convoked a plenary session for 21 and 22 September 1946 which was attended by all faithful party members and former Bloc candidates.²⁸ This congress reaffirmed its faith in the party, its leadership, and its platform, and proposed a number of measures to reactivate the Bloc's political involvement. These included the formulation of more realistic, precise, yet daring proposals for social and economic reform in the fields of labour, agriculture, and colonization; attempts to publicize the party through means of the radio, public meetings, and the publication of bulletins and pamphlets; the naming of a chief organizer to co-ordinate an intensive programme of organization; and the launching of a subscription campaign in November 1946.²⁹ While efforts to launch the subscription campaign were made, the party succeeded in collecting only \$4500 of its \$15,000 goal.³⁰ The only other Bloc activity of significance was a series of radio broadcasts presented by André Laurendeau in October and November 1946. However, they received little attention and only one was reported in Le Devoir, which had previously been a faithful recorder of the activities of the Bloc.³¹

By the fall of 1946 the Bloc Populaire had lost any significant political influence which it retained after the 1945

federal election. Struggling with the problems of finance and organization, the Bloc again faced the dilemma of abandoning its provincial activities to concentrate on federal participation.³² Although a motion that the Bloc Populaire not participate in the next provincial election and concentrate its activities in the federal area was passed by the Bloc National Council on 10 May 1947,³³ it was rescinded at a subsequent meeting of the Council on 9 June.³⁴ While some Bloc members preferred the "solution fédérale" for the Bloc's problems, others, such as André Laurendeau, believed that if the Bloc could not continue both its federal and provincial involvement, it should completely abandon political activity.³⁵ The problem was discussed at another plenary meeting of the Bloc Populaire membership on 28 June in Montreal.³⁶ A proposal from André Laurendeau that the Bloc be transformed into a non-political educational movement was rejected by the party membership. On 28 June Laurendeau resigned as provincial leader of the Bloc Populaire and as a member of the party.³⁷ He would, however, continue to sit in the Legislative Assembly as the member for Montreal-Laurier and, according to his statement, continue to defend the same ideas as before. In a letter to Maxime Raymond on 6 July Laurendeau explained that his decision had been prompted by the difference of opinion between himself and the other party leaders as to the future of the Bloc.³⁸ He felt that the resolution passed at the meeting of the National Council on 10 May stating that the Bloc should limit its activities to the federal sphere reflected the opinion of the majority of the leaders of the party. Although the decision had

since been rescinded, Laurendeau believed that the attitude still persisted. As he strongly opposed this solution to the difficulties experienced by the Bloc, Laurendeau explained that he had decided to resign in order to prevent another conflict which might split the party.³⁹

Maxime Raymond did not accept Laurendeau's decision to resign with grace. He was particularly concerned over the fact that it seemed to cast doubt on the intention of the Bloc Populaire to remain active both federally and provincially. In a statement to Le Devoir on 9 July he emphatically stated that there would be no changes in the orientation of the party: .

Pour éviter toute équivoque dans l'esprit du public, je tiens à déclarer formellement que le Bloc Populaire Canadien a le même programme qu'il a formulé lors de sa formation, et qu'il continue ses activités politiques dans le domaine provincial et dans le domaine fédéral, avec la même orientation, la même doctrine, les mêmes idées à défendre.⁴⁰

To members of the National Council, Raymond expressed the opinion that Laurendeau's resignation as provincial leader and from the party had been motivated solely by his decision to accept a position with Le Devoir which required that he be free of political affiliation.⁴¹

The disintegration of the Bloc Populaire Canadien had been well advanced by the summer of 1946. After the summer of 1947 it simply ceased to exist as a political entity. In the words of the executive of the party in 1947, the Bloc had not been able to survive the "crise de confiance dans le succès et la viabilité du Bloc, qui a commencé en juin 1945, et qui a continuellement grandi depuis."⁴² The Bloc Populaire had been

formed as a protest against the war. This protest had been its unifying factor and its motivating force. With the conclusion of the war, and in view of the Bloc's inability to win the confidence and support of the French Canadian voters, the party, unstable from its conception, rapidly disintegrated.

FOOTNOTES FOR THE EPILOGUE

¹Le Devoir, May 15, 1945, p. 3.

²Le Devoir, January 18, 1945, p. 6.

³Le Bloc, February 22, 1934, p. 8, 9. Even the remarks included in Le Bloc from the Montreal Gazette spoke favourably of the impression created by Laurendeau during his speech.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Le Devoir, February 21, 1945, p. 1.

⁷Le Devoir, March 14, 1945, p. 8, March 16, 1945, p. 1, e.

⁸Le Devoir, March 23, 1945, p. 6.

⁹Le Devoir, March 7, 1945, p. 10.

¹⁰Le Devoir, May 4, 1945, p. 6.

¹¹Le Devoir, May 19, 1945, p. 6.

¹²Le Devoir, February 22, 1945, p. 6.

¹³Le Devoir, April 12, 1945, p. 10.

¹⁴Le Bloc, March 1, 1945, p. 5.

¹⁵Le Devoir, November 7, 1945, p. 4.

¹⁶Ibid.

¹⁷I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Mémoire de l'exécutif du Conseil National.

¹⁸Le Devoir, September 19, 1945, p. 2.

¹⁹Le Devoir, July 23, 1945, p. 10.

²⁰Le Devoir, November 5, 1945, p. 4.

²¹Le Bloc, August 8, 1945, p. 8.

²²Ibid.

²³Le Devoir, October 29, 1945, p. 10.

²⁴Le Devoir, November 12, 1945, p. 10.

²⁵Le Devoir, November 19, 1945, p. 2.

²⁶Ibid.

²⁷I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Mémoires de l'exécutif du Conseil National.

²⁸Ibid.

²⁹Ibid.

³⁰Ibid.

³¹Le Devoir, October 19, 1946, p. 13.

³²I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Lettre de Jean Drapeau, Jean Drapeau to Maxime Raymond, May 30, 1947. 'According to Drapeau: "L'on apprend de partout -- c'est un véritable secret de polichinelle --, que le Bloc se terminerait de la façon suivante: il se retirerait officiellement du domaine provincial et annoncerait qu'il se consacre dorénavant au domaine fédéral. Quelles qu'en soient les variantes, ce sont là, répète-t-on, les grandes lignes de la fin, telles que projetées. Et l'on assiste de plus en plus, à la réalisation partielle de ce 'plan' avant même que la déclaration ne soit faite. Tous les collaborateurs en parlent ouvertement, et l'organisation de l'Union Nationale est fort active auprès de nos amis."

³³I.H., ibid., André Laurendeau to Maxime Raymond, July 6, 1947.

³⁴Ibid.

³⁵Ibid.

³⁶Ibid.

³⁷Le Devoir, July 8, 1947, p. 3.

³⁸I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, André Laurendeau to Maxime Raymond July 6, 1947.

³⁹Ibid. Laurendeau explained: "Bien que je ne sois pas un partisan du statu quo, pour moi, supprimer l'aile provinciale du Bloc c'est opter pour la mauvaise solution, car c'est nécessairement enlever au parti son identité, et tomber sous

l'influence directe de M. Duplessis. En d'autres termes, c'est fournir à l'Union Nationale le parti fédéral qu'elle voudrait avoir et qu'elle semble incapable de se donner. Comme je l'ai souligné en Chambre, c'est risquer de courir, avec la meilleure foi du monde, à un nouveau 1911."

⁴⁰Le Devoir, July 9, 1947, p. 3.

⁴¹I.H., Maxime Raymond Papers, Lettre aux membres du Conseil National du B.P.C. pour réunion du 13 septembre 1947 au Queen's, Maxime Raymond to André Vigeant, September 8, 1947.

⁴²I.H., ibid., Mémoire de l'exécutif du Conseil National.

CONCLUSION

The five years of political involvement of the Bloc Populaire Canadien represent a short yet significant chapter in the history of French Canadian nationalism. Formed in September 1942, the Bloc Populaire directly resulted from the growing opposition of French Canadians to Canadian involvement in World War II and, more particularly, from their fear that this involvement would result in the introduction of conscription. The campaign sponsored by the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada for a negative vote in the conscription plebiscite on 17 April 1942 was a significant factor in stimulating the nationalist response which resulted in the founding of the Bloc Populaire. While not a direct transformation of the Ligue pour la Défense du Canada, the Bloc Populaire drew its inspiration from the efforts of the Ligue, and many of the individuals active in the Ligue campaign later became members of the Bloc.

While the stimulus for the formation of the Bloc Populaire was federal in origin, the party itself chose to combine both federal and provincial involvement. This dual nature of the Bloc Populaire was evident in both its platform and in the original membership of the party. While the leadership of the party was assumed by Maxime Raymond, federal member of Parliament

for Beauharnois-Laprairie, who broke with the Liberal party over the plebiscite, the original members of the Bloc were drawn from both the federal and provincial fields. From the federal side Edouard Lacroix and Dr. Pierre Gauthier, members of Parliament from Quebec, broke with the Liberal party to join the Bloc Populaire. Interest in provincial politics within the Bloc was represented by a group of provincial nationalists which included Paul Gouin, founder of the Action Libérale Nationale in 1934, Dr. Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult. However, co-operation between the federal members and this group of nationalists, concerned primarily with provincial politics, was never realized and the controversy over federal versus provincial involvement for the Bloc Populaire continued to plague the Bloc until its collapse. However, the division over the orientation of the Bloc Populaire and the question of whether it should be federal or provincial was not merely a question of political tactics. This conflict reveals an important difference in the political philosophies which guided the members of the Bloc Populaire. Those Bloc members most interested in the federal activities of the Bloc were primarily concerned with constitutional reform and with the protection of the rights of French Canada through constitutional means. Their primary interest was opposition to the introduction of conscription and protest against Canadian involvement in the war. The provincial group were above all social and economic reformers who were convinced that the future of French Canada would be determined within the provincial context. Many of the

reforms proposed by this group, such as the nationalization of the hydro-electrical industry in Quebec, were radical and not easily accepted by the federal group who were conservative in their social and economic thinking.

The Bloc Populaire adopted well-defined platforms in both the federal and provincial areas. The Bloc Populaire was a nationalist party and the influence of traditional French Canadian nationalism was evident in both the federal and provincial sections of its programme. The federal platform of the Bloc Populaire emphasized three major demands: the recognition of complete equality for both French-speaking and English-speaking Canadians; respect for provincial autonomy; and the realization of full independence for Canada. The influence of Henri Bourassa, whom Maxime Raymond claimed as the inspiration for his own political career, is clearly evident in the support given by the Bloc to these issues. However, the issue which dominated the federal activity of the Bloc Populaire was unquestionably the party's opposition to conscription and its protest against what it felt was an excessively demanding role for Canada in the war. Its participation in the House of Commons and its campaign in the federal by-elections in 1943 and the federal general election of 1945 were based on these issues.

The provincial platform of the Bloc Populaire adopted an extensive programme of social and economic reform. Again the influence of traditional French Canadian nationalism is clearly evident both in the ideological framework in which the

Bloc developed its platform and in the reforms it proposed. The priority given by the Bloc to the role of the family as a stable and beneficial element in society, its acceptance of Roman Catholicism as an integral part of its ideology, and its concern for the preservation of the French Canadian cultural identity clearly identify the Bloc as a descendent of the nationalism expounded by Abbé Lionel Groulx in the 1920's. A more recent nationalist influence was evident in the social and economic reforms adopted by the Bloc Populaire. The Bloc based these reforms on the Programme de Restauration Sociale published by the Ecole Sociale Populaire in 1933. The inspiration for Bloc proposals such as the introduction of professional corporatism, its campaign against the "dictature économique" of the trusts in Quebec, and its encouragement of agriculture through measures such as colonization, rural electrification, and the co-operative movement is easily traced to the Programme. The platform of the Bloc Populaire was in many respects identical to the 1934 manifesto of the Action Libérale Nationale since both were based on the Programme. However, unlike the Action Libérale Nationale, the Bloc Populaire no longer looked to a revival of the rural economy as the panacea for all the social and economic problems of Quebec. In this respect the Bloc Populaire shows a far more realistic acceptance of industrialism and the problems which it produced than did the Action Libérale Nationale.

Considered as a whole, the Bloc platform must be described as conservative. While some reforms such as the nationalization of electricity and urban planning were indeed

radical in the context of the 1940's, they were exceptions in a platform which endorsed the private enterprise system, denounced socialism, and allowed only limited government-sponsored social welfare measures. Nor did the nationalist framework within which the platform was written permit radical solutions to the problems it discussed. The influence of traditional nationalist concerns -- the reverence of the past and its heroes, the still persistent if lessened idealization of rural life, the acceptance of the existing social system, and the identification with middle-class ideals -- were dominant characteristics of the platform of the Bloc Populaire.

Plagued by internal divisions and dissensions from the moment it was formed, the Bloc Populaire never realized the unity necessary for a strong political party. The conflicts between the federal and provincial elements of the Bloc, and between radical and conservative, were often intensified by the clashes of strong personalities and personal hostilities. The disparate elements which composed the Bloc Populaire were never welded into a common will. Maxime Raymond, chosen as leader in the hopes that he could unite the nationalist elements, lacked the flexibility and tact necessary to accommodate the different views represented within the party.

The Bloc failed in its attempts to prevent the application of conscription and in its efforts to limit the participation of Canada in the war. However, it did provide expression during the war for the very real frustration experienced by many French

Canadians who felt ignored and betrayed by the country's leaders. Nor did the party win the electoral support for which it so enthusiastically campaigned. Nationalist in conception, the Bloc Populaire owed most of its support to the nationalist vote. The nationalist tone of its platform, the accusations of extremism against it, and the youthfulness of many of its candidates and campaigners prevented the Bloc Populaire from establishing a solid base of support among the basically conservative French Canadian electorate. Formed as a protest movement in 1942, the Bloc Populaire never established the unified base necessary for permanent political activity. Already weakened by internal divisions and defections, the Bloc Populaire slowly disintegrated after the conclusion of the war in 1945. While the Bloc Populaire Canadien disappeared, many of the issues it contested and the ideal of equality for French Canadians which it defended persisted as significant issues in the political development of Quebec.

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The main source of research for this thesis on the Bloc Populaire Canadien has been the papers of party leader, Maxime Raymond, which are deposited with the Institut d'Histoire de l'Amérique-Française in Montreal. These papers proved to be an invaluable source of information on the Bloc Populaire from the point of view of Maxime Raymond. Unfortunately, when these papers were consulted, no cataloguing had yet been done on the papers, and they remained very much in the order in which they had been left by Maxime Raymond. This has caused a problem in citing references for material found in the Raymond papers, as duplicate subject files were frequently found and several files were unnamed. When a name appeared on a file, that name has been cited directly behind the name of the papers consulted. Care has been taken to reproduce as exactly as possible the name appearing on the file in order to indicate in which file on the topic the material was found. While documentation on the "imbroglio" is not abundant in the Raymond papers, the papers of Abbé Lionel Groulx, also at the Institut d'Histoire, proved to be a valuable additional source for material in this area. The other source of research which proved indispensable were the Paul Gouin papers, located at the Public Archives in Ottawa.

This collection proved to be particularly valuable in documenting the formation of the party and in providing information on the "imbroglio." Much of the material used to reconstruct the events of the "imbroglio" was taken from the Paul Gouin papers, and it is hoped that this has not resulted in too much of a bias in favour of the position taken during the dispute by Paul Gouin, Dr. Philippe Hamel, and René Chaloult.

Another source which has proved very useful in the writing of this thesis were the three volumes of Robert Rumilly's Histoire de la Province de Québec which cover the period from 1942 to 1945. The Rumilly volumes were frustrating to use at times, for, while presenting material of a very valuable nature, Rumilly seldom provides the source for this material. Since collaborating evidence for many of his comments was found in either the papers of Maxime Raymond or Paul Gouin, Rumilly has been cited in many instances as an authoritative source even when supporting evidence for the material he discusses was not found among the personal collections consulted.

Finally, the two newspapers, Le Devoir and Le Bloc, were also important sources. While some issues were missing in the series of Le Bloc consulted, a sufficient number were examined in order to form a clear idea of the policy of the newspaper and to gather significant information about the platform and activities of the Bloc Populaire.

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